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[GRANGER INTERVENES.]

## GRAND COURT.

BY THE

Author of "Sometimes Sapphire, Sometimes Pale," &c.

### CHAPTER XIX.

Lo! on the eastern summit clad in gray,  
Morn, like a horseman girt for travel, comes,  
And from his tower of mist  
Night's watchman hurries down.

Kirk White.

Boom, boom! The voice of the engine, coming nearer and nearer, sounded in the ears of Philip like a threat of approaching danger, if not destruction. The lappets of his coat, somewhat wide, and stuffed with papers, and other things, thrust into them in the hurry of a journey, might easily catch into some part of the engine, and then—the thought was too horrible! There was no footboard running along those carriages, nothing but the step, and that was insecure footing, with the murderous Rokewood, striving night and main, to thrust him down. His foot slipped. A laugh burst from the fleshy lips of the secretary. Philip regained the step, leant forward more into the carriage, and bent Rokewood back. The secretary clenched his fist to take aim at the excited white young face, with its fierce gray eyes, and set teeth. Then Norah rushed across the carriage, and caught the cruel guardian of her destiny by the thick curls of his grizzled hair, which it was his whim to wear somewhat longer than fashion prescribed. It was the saving of Ruthven's life, for the struggle had waxed deadly, and the train was close upon them, but now, uttering a savage yell of pain, Rokewood fell back from the window, and at the same moment Philip turned the handle of the door, since his hands were now free, and he entered the carriage, and sank exhausted into a seat just as the train went whirling past at desperate speed, with uproar, noise and clamour, like the voices of many waters; whirr, boom, rush! and it was gone.

There was the quiet night sky, one star pale and large, looking in at the travellers. Rokewood sat

like some grim gaoler of the middle ages, clutching the slender arm of Norah in his tigerish claws, his face, seen in the light of the carriage lamp, working fearfully. He had wished desperately to kill Ruthven; Ruthven was the lover of Viola, Viola for whom he had reserved a fate peculiarly cruel; Viola, around whose path he was about to weave a web of mysteries. Something whispered to him that a love, strong as death, might possibly be more powerful than his murderous hate, deeper than his diabolical cunning, and in the end prove triumphant over him and his base accomplices. What feats of daring would not such a love attempt? how easily might the diplomacy, keen and watchful, of a never sleeping devotion, outwit his most subtly laid plans, unravel the meshes of his cruelly woven schemes? and yet, even yet, the twin doves might escape out of the snare of the fowler. If he could have thrust him down, down, just under the wheels of that thundering, roaring engine, then there would have been an end of the matter; nobody would, or could have suspected him; he would have denied all knowledge of the young man, and it would have been supposed, simply, that his violent death had been but the consequence of his rashness. Ah! and he could have done it, could but for that slight determined girl looking at him steadily with all the concentrated scorn which he feels, and knows that he deserves, lighting up the depths of her wonderful blue eyes. Ah, if he could only kill her now! he hates her so; she has defied him so often, and she seems to fear him so little, if at all; yet he knows that a sudden and violent death would create inquiry, raise black suspicion, perhaps absolutely lead him by a halter to the scaffold itself. No, she must die slowly, slowly, and with a most murderous hate he resolves, while his hands tighten upon her arm, that she shall suffer to the uttermost, drain to the veriest drops the cup of bitterness.

She has uttered no cry, no complaint, and hitherto Ruthven, occupied with his own escape, has not noticed the conduct of the ruffianly secretary, but now, looking up, he sees the glaring eye-balls, the cruel hands upon the slender arm. Norah's hat has fallen

off, she is pale, her hair is straying upon her shoulders. Philip sprang up and laid his hands passionately upon the collar of Rokewood. The other turned, and a deadly scuffle went on for a few moments.

On sped the train. It was the great north express, whirring past stations, where the lights flashed and the faces of men and women on the platforms looked ghostly white in the gas flare, and then, with a thundering roll, out again into the darkness of the night; and still those two men struggled with each other madly, rolled over one another, panted with hate, wrath, and desire for vengeance.

It was an unholy sight, and one from which the Lady Norah hid her eyes, for the earl's daughter, though brave as a lioness, was intensely feminine. And positively the two men hardly knew at this moment what they were contending for. Ruthven was rash and passionate, his feelings overcame his prudence, else, had he never dashed so wildly at the escaping train at the sore risk of his life; and even now he stopped not to argue, to ask himself what he meant to do if he proved victor in this angry struggle. He had no thought of killing Rokewood; still, even that catastrophe might have happened in the excess of excitement which animated him.

At last the elder man gave signs of exhaustion. Another moment, and Philip was kneeling with all his weight upon the panting, broad chest of the evil secretary.

"Let me breathe," panted Rokewood.

Smiling grimly, Ruthven granted the request of his fallen adversary. He slowly removed the pressure, but still, still he grasped the miserable man's collar. He would not suffer him to rise.

"Villain," he said, passionately; "what have you done with Viola?"

"She has gone to an excellent school in France," responded Rokewood; "the establishment attached to the convent of the Sacred Heart, in the Faubourg St. Germain, at Paris. Nay, I will give you the address. You shall write, if it seems good to you, to the head of the educational department—Mademoiselle de la Harp. It is a school only for the French

and English aristocracy; enquire if Viola be not there. There is also an English music teacher—Miss Wheeler—write to her. Nay, write to Viola herself; she may answer through me.”

“You have put her into a convent,” said passionately Philip.

Rokewood laughed.

“Good young man,” he said; “you talk of what you know not. Lady Viola is not in the convent, but in the school attached to the convent. I have written and told Colonel Claverhouse the whole affair, even the ruse I have been compelled to employ to get rid of that very troublesome old woman Miss Danvers, who wishes to make a match between her scapegrace nephew and the daughter of the late earl. I have told the colonel that I find the management of these two wild, rebellious girls, too much for my strength, overburdened as I am with hundreds of caring cares and heavy responsibilities. The Lady Norah, I have no objection to tell you, is going straight to my ancestral home in Cumberland, where, under the care of a good governess, I hope she will repent of her unfeminine and disgraceful conduct.”

Philip clenched his fist, and he longed to deal his enemy a blow, but the wretch lay helpless under his hand, and the young man was too brave to strike a fallen foe.

“Dare not to speak one word against that lady,” said Ruthven, hoarsely.

Rokewood sneered. He had no great dread now of Philip; only when the train stopped at the station there might be some difficulty in getting rid of the young man. A thought struck him, however—a quick, clever, wicked thought—and he smiled to himself as he laid his evil plan.

Meanwhile, poor Philip was conscious that he had lost the fare of his long journey. He had taken a ticket through to Edinburgh, and although he was on the road, this was another line, and he would have most likely to pay for her journey or his own back to London. Unhappy Philip—he had acted like a madman, he told himself. Yet he had found out something, he had found out that Viola was to be placed at a convent school at Paris. He would go there. Poor Philip! and how without funds?

“Is it true, do you believe, Lady Norah,” he asked, suddenly; “that Lady Viola is sent to France?”

“I do not know, Mr. Ruthven. The whole is mysterious, and that dark man of plots and cruelty is alone conscious of the truth. This is what happened: Miss Danvers arrived rather early this morning in her close carriage—”

“I left her at your door,” interrupted Philip.

Norah bowed.

“Exactly so. She was at once admitted to the presence of her nephew, who—who was wounded in the arm,” added Norah, faltering.

“Exactly so. Go on, pray, Lady Norah.”

For Norah was hesitating in confusion at the mention of Hammond.

“Lady Monkhouse was graciously pleased to receive Miss Danvers kindly. She, Lady Monkhouse, has actually been kind—kind to Hammond,” added Norah, speaking hastily. “Mr. Rokewood was excessively polite to Miss Danvers, flattered her, and even appeared to fall in with her views in regard to us both. He said that we should both go to some school in the Champs Elysées, and that she should conduct us there. Colonel Claverhouse was to be written to. Viola was to come to Grosvenor Square. Granger packed my clothes and hers—not together, I remarked that—and Miss Danvers sent back her carriage with a note to Viola, telling her to have that lady’s clothes packed, and to bring money, borrow a cloak and hat, and proceed at once in the carriage to London Bridge, where I was to meet her with Miss Danvers and Mr. Rokewood.”

“So far good, my things were packed; I took my place in a carriage of Mr. Rokewood’s, accompanied by himself, Granger, a man servant, and Miss Danvers, and instead of driving to London Bridge we were taken to Euston Square; arrived there, Miss Danvers, flew into a rage, saying that she had been tricked. Mr. Rokewood politely laughed, and told her that a little ruse had been his only means of getting rid of her importunity; that his carriage was at her commands—his carriage and his coachman to drive her back to Strawberry Lodge.

“Then knowing that she had sent her carriage, and had been tricked into writing a letter to dear Viola, she burst into a fury, refused the conveyance of Mr. Rokewood, appealed to the strangers crowding upon

the platform, and so on. But Mr. Rokewood was more calm, more sarcastic, more completely master of the position than the well-meaning and excitable old lady. A few words from him settled the question, and enlisted the sympathies of the bystanders in his favour. He took off his hat and bowed to the people who crowded about, anxious to hear what the excitable old lady was screaming about. He assured everybody, with smiling lips, that he was Mr. Rokewood, secretary, friend, and bosom counsellor of the late unfortunate Earl of Monkhouse; he had been left guardian to his children—difficult charge—he shrugged his shoulders—self-willed, dangerous age, terrible responsibility—necessary, alas! to separate the two—one consigned to an excellent lady in France—the other about to be placed under a superior governess in a quiet country house, good moral training, wholesome discipline, tempered with kindness—excitable old lady—nephew a fortune-hunter; necessary to elude her attempts.

“There stood Granger and the footman in black clothes, looking—oh, so respectable; there stood I, speechless with anger, surprise, and wounded pride; there stood little Miss Danvers, wig awry, bonnet half off her head, furious, inarticulate with rage.

“Of course wrong carried the day; the porters, the crowd of passengers, everybody, jeered the old lady, and bowed to the calm polished gentleman. I was hurried into a carriage with Mr. Rokewood; Granger went and took the tickets, returned, seated herself in another carriage; off went the train, swift, straight and cruel, into the night, bearing me as I verily believe towards my death.”

She spoke calmly, with a sarcastic power which perfectly astonished Rokewood. How he hated her for her cold contempt, her complete reading of his motives, her consummate disdain of him, while he held her very life in his power.

Philip all this while had not relaxed his hold of his enemy’s coat collar, had not suffered him to rise from the ground, and now he spurned him with his foot.

“Miserable!” he said, wrathfully.

Even then Rokewood could not restrain a smile of contempt.

“Enjoy your triumph, lady fair,” he said calmly.

“When the train stops at Penniston—”

There was an evil gleam in the secretary’s eyes which inspired Norah with a new courage.

“Mr. Ruthven,” she said, “that man contemplates giving you up as a thief, or a madman, when we arrive at the station. He will be believed—a man in a first-class carriage, with a splendid gold chain, lots of luggage, lots of money, two servants. Such is the justice of men—you with a ticket for another line—”

“A second-class one, too,” said Philip, ruefully.

“Well, you without luggage—for of course your portmanteau is gone off with the other train—you will be insulted, perhaps taken to a prison; escape, Mr. Ruthven. Fear not for me. I blame myself a thousand times for acting so entirely upon impulse, as I did when I called out to you, but now you will know where I am, and also where Viola is, if what he says is true. Therefore, escape. When the train slackens speed as it approaches Penniston can you not let yourself out?—cautiously letting yourself fall away from the direction the engine is taking, as the scientific men teach. You will do us no good shut up in prison, whereas—”

“I will act upon it Lady Norah,” said Philip, sorrowfully. “I have acted like a madman—like an idiot; but to leave you in this villain’s power is horrible.”

“He will hardly dare to murder me in cold blood,” said courageous Norah, calmly. “He will wait awhile; meanwhile watch.”

Philip had slightly relaxed his hold of Rokewood, and now, with a sudden spring, the secretary was up, and struggling with him violently. The conflict had been merely wrestling heretofore, but now Philip struck his adversary a violent, stinging blow, well aimed, well planted, which laid his cheek open. Norah was woman enough to turn faint at the sight of blood. Rokewood sank down half-fainting, and at that very moment the train slackened speed.

“Escape, escape!” cried Norah; “he will accuse you of heaven alone knows what.”

Philip saw the force of the argument. Let the train but once stop amid the lights and crowd of the station, and a prison would certainly receive him. With one wild glance, he lifted the hand of Norah to his lips, then opened the door of the carriage and sprang out.

Norah watched him standing unhurt under the high sand bank.

“Thank heaven,” she said, fervently.

A few minutes longer, and behold the train comes to a stand amid the light and bustle of Penniston Station. It has been a six hours’ journey by express; the station clock strikes out the hour of two.

Rokewood, grasping Norah’s arm, forces her to descend. Granger, and Peters, a footman, immediately join them on the platform. Then Rokewood raised his voice and called out loudly:

“Where is the station-master? I have been attacked by a fellow, a certain medical student, named Philip Ruthven. I will give you his address in London, if you cannot find him here. I most particularly desire his arrest.”

The voice of the secretary trembled with rage and excitement. He was now infuriated against Ruthven; he had been worsted in a combat with him, trampled down, and knelt upon, and no dread or risk of what might come out upon a trial should prevent his ruining the young student. Now, if he could only clutch him and disgrace him with the arm of the law. He told a well concocted story:

“At the station at Granton, two hours before, the villain Ruthven had made a dash at the carriage, although he was too poor to pay the fare, and had entered the carriage with Mr. Rokewood, with intent to rob and murder him. He knew that Mr. Rokewood was travelling express to his seat in Cumberland, that he might put the Lady Norah Beaumont under the care of her governess. He knew that Mr. Rokewood had a large sum of money about him and valuable jewels in his portmanteau. He knew also that the train was express, and would not stop for two hours. He fought his way violently into the carriage,” and here Rokewood pointed to the broken window—“and he commenced beating and bruising me. I defended myself as well as I could. It was a long, fearful combat. I am much exhausted. Look at the blow the villain dealt me!”—and Rokewood showed his bleeding cheek. “He was unable to rifle my pockets of anything but my watch (Rokewood had thrown his valuable gold watch, heavy gold chain, and antique snuff-box, of frosted silver, out of the window), chain, and curious snuff-box, but he escaped out of the train just as the carriage slackened speed. You will find him under the sand banks a little higher up. Ten—fifteen pounds to anybody who brings him to me alive. I go on to Cumberland Manor in the carriage which is waiting for me; but to-morrow I shall come into Penniston, in hopes that you have found this adventurer, this ruffian who calls himself a gentleman.”

A murmur of sympathy, deep, respectful, indignant, greeted the well-delivered speech of the prosperous man of wickedness. Lady Norah was too faint to protest, and besides that the brutal grasp of the secretary upon her arm made her feel sick with pain. A large close carriage was awaiting the travellers outside the station gates. Into this Norah was hurried. Rokewood took his place by her side. Granger sat opposite, and the carriage rolled off along a smooth road. A whole hour passed thus. The windows were closely shut. Norah lay back, and fatigue overcame anxiety, suffering, even fear; she slept long and deeply. When she awoke it was with a rough jolt of the carriage wheel, the travellers were journeying among the wildest fastnesses of the Cumberland mountains. Mountains, gaunt, giant-like, grand, grim, awful, shut in the view. More mountains, and yet more, when a turn in the road disclosed range behind range of those black, silent, desolate hills.

“Am I to live among these fastnesses?” asked Norah, suddenly.

“You are to live where I please,” responded Rokewood, “and how I please.”

Granger, sitting opposite, burst into a shrill, mocking laugh.

“And I am to die, I suppose, how you please, and where you please?” asked Norah, in a tone of lofty scorn.

“We will discuss the manner of your death another time, Lady Norah Beaumont,” responded Rokewood, with a sneer. “You have accused me pretty often of compassing your death. I treat such accusations with the utter contempt they merit.”

“Quite right too, sir, if I might be permitted to give an opinion,” said Granger, bitterly.

“You may give your opinion, Granger, and your advice also to this wilful young person, as often as you choose,” said Rokewood.

“Which opinion and advice I shall utterly spurn,” said Lady Norah, losing her admirable self-command for one instant, stung by the insults of the lady’s maid. Then regaining her calmness: “For the future I shall meet everything with silence.”

Granger laughed again.

“Your ladyship will find the new governess is not to be put aside so easily. I have heard enough of Madame Diana.”

But Norah resolutely refused to speak again, and the carriage continued to jolt and rumble over the mountain roads. After a time the horses put forth a little more speed, and the road grew smoother. Then the carriage stopped, and the coachman called out “Gate.”



A little thatched roof was seen amid a tuft of waving trees. Then a man came out yawning, and unfastened the gate—the carriage rolled through under a thick avenue. The branches met above, and Norah could hear the cawing of rooks.

"Cumberton Grange!" The name had a somewhat portentous and unholly sound in her ears. Whose old house was this? She was to live here, a prisoner, among foes. Of that she felt convinced. But how was it that Rokewood—if the house belonged to him, as he stated that it did—how was it that he had never talked of "his ancestral home during the lifetime of the late earl?" The avenue was somewhat long, still everything must have an end, and so had that drive.

Suddenly the horses were driven up in front of a brown-faced, two-storied house, with long narrow windows, stone mullioned, a gable-ended side wing, a deep stone portico before the door. Seen indistinctly in the light of the moon it was not possible to take in at a glance all the full gloom and mysterious desolation of that lonely house among the mountains.

Yet was the Lady Norah sensible of a shudder as she descended from the carriage. The chill air of early morning, for the gray dawn was waking in the east, struck home to her heart, and made her shudder. The coachman rang the house bell. Evidently they had been expected, for the door was opened at once, and Norah entered a large, dimly-lighted hall, whose uncarpeted flags struck icy cold to her feet. A raw-looking young countryman, half asleep, with a head of uncombed red hair, no shoes on his stocking feet, a half-stupid, half-cunning leer in his eyes, raised a lamp high in the air, and the shadows seemed to dance and dart about the old hall like grim ghosts at play.

"Supper, Bob—supper in the oak sitting-room at once."

"It's laid," said the youth, speaking with a strong Cumberland accent. "Cold beef and fowls in oak room; laid all."

He did not say sir or madam, this wild, independent Bob of the mountains.

Norah had not tasted food since mid-day, and now she felt famished. She was about to follow Rokewood into the oak-room, when he turned upon her with a ferocious gleam in his eye, and thrust a candlestick into her hand.

"You do not require supper," he said. "Sleep is all that is needful in your case. Follow Granger, she will conduct you to your room."

Norah did not protest; only her heart sank. It would be so easy to kill her by starvation, to call in a doctor just at the last—hush the matter up, and bury her afterwards in some gray churchyard among the Cumberland hills. Was that what Rokewood had brought her there for? She glanced at Bob imploringly. The rough lad's face lighted up with wonder and an awkward joy when he saw those beautiful eyes raised to his so earnestly.

"Bob," she said, "bring me some bread and cheese; anything you have. I am starving."

Rokewood was out of hearing, but Granger broke out shrilly:

"If you do, if you give this disobedient young lady anything after the master has said she shan't have it, out of the place you march, bag and baggage; and you know the wages are good."

Bob shuffled off, but his eyes sought Norah's once more, as the earl's daughter was mounting the wide staircase, and the ignorant, but warm-hearted lad, had the audacity to wink at the lovely captive. Norah's heart felt lighter.

"I have one friend here, thank heaven!" she said.

#### CHAPTER XX.

Away, away, your flattering arts  
May now betray some simpler hearts;  
And you will smile at their believing,  
And they shall weep at your deceiving.

Byron.

HAMMOND DANVERS lay feverish and moaning faintly with pain on the morning of that eventful day whose records we have devoted so much time to writing out. He knew that Norah, his adored Norah, was again a prisoner under the same roof with him; after all his wild efforts to rescue her. He did not know but that he might be prosecuted for his forcible entrance into that stately mansion, and if so, what would his father, his severe father say? Perhaps he would cut off his allowance. Certainly he would blame him sorely, and to think that he was farther than ever from the rescue of Norah, that there she was, and there she would be, probably, for four years longer, ground under the iron heel of that cruel tyranny.

It was maddening to think of all these things. Then add to this that his wounded arm was swelled and gave him indescribable torment. He rolled from side to side, and almost howled in the mingled pain

of body and mind. Just as a silver-voiced clock in the adjoining room sounded the hour of ten the door of his apartment opened slowly, and a lady glided up to his bedside. It was the lady whom he had seen on the previous night, none other than the gracious Countess of Monkhouse herself.

Lady Monkhouse, having finished her conference with Rokewood in her boudoir, and having come, as the reader will perhaps remember, to the conclusion that Danvers and Ruthven were not to be prosecuted, now entered the sick chamber of the young gentleman, apparently actuated by motives of kindness.

It would indeed, at this time, have been difficult to assign any distinct reason for this extraordinary woman's interest in handsome Hammond Danvers. The young man raised his head partially from his pillow, where it had been rolling from side to side in the restlessness of pain. He saw the countess attired in an elegant and most becoming morning costume. She had commenced already to mingle some colour with her rich black garb, and on this morning she wore a long robe of black satin, confined round the waist by a girdle of purple silk. The dress was made high to the throat, and a large, richly-embroidered collar of white muslin, pointed in shape and placed over purple silk cut to its form, was fastened by a brooch of plain, pure gold.

The raven black hair of Lady Monkhouse was dressed high, and bound with a glittering purple band. On her forehead were rich, short curls, almost meeting the black line of eyebrows. The cheeks of this woman seemed fresh, bright and blooming as the petals of a damask rose. She was more than forty years old, but in a singular manner had she retained not only the bloom and beauty, but even the slender and rounded contours of youth.

Lord Lytton remarks somewhere that it is astonishing how well people wear who only think of themselves, and notwithstanding the inevitable wear and tear of such a life as the countess had led, it is a positive fact that this woman had never hitherto wasted human care or human love upon any human being. All her thoughts had concentrated themselves about one focus, and that, it is needless to say, was herself.

Hammond Danvers was a young man with fine, artistic tastes; he could not help, then, admiring, in some degree, this handsome, graceful woman, so becomingly dressed, and to whom the slight badge of her widowhood, as shown in the delicate crape border, only added a charm more piquant. He loved Norah with a deep and earnest passion, which had its roots in his very soul, but he admired this woman, some seventeen years older than himself, as he would admire some well executed painting in the picture gallery at his home. At the same time, he was conscious of a depth and wickedness in the large, brilliant black eyes; more than that, when she came softly to his invalid couch, and extended her hand to meet his in kindly greeting, was there not something else, a flash, a light, a burning light it seemed to him, as of smouldering fire? a something which made him resolve "to be civil" to this woman at all events.

"I regret more than I can express," said the countess, smiling, so as to show her glittering white teeth, "that such an accident should have happened to you. My uncle, Mr. Rokewood, acted on the impulse of the moment, and you must yourself admit," added Lady Monkhouse, "that your enterprise was bold, daring, alarming to a quiet household."

She laughed a little shrill laugh, as she spoke. "And now I fear you are in great pain, and must be kept quiet. Shall I give you some lemonade?"

Hammond was at this juncture impregnated with a deep distrust of the scheming countess—a large fortune would accrue to her on the death of the twins, and he doubted not that she meant to starve and torture them out of existence. She was wicked—emphatically. He read wickedness in the brightness of the eyes, in the very grasp of the slender snowy fingers upon the lemonade-glass.

"She may be going to poison me," thought Hammond.

Strangely enough the young gentleman felt an odd apathy as to the intentions of the beautiful wicked countess; he was in pain; delirium was stealing over his brain—Norah lay, as it were, bound and helpless in the clutches of her foes—blame and shame, and probably punishment, from his somewhat severe father, awaited him on his recovery; at the best, separation from Norah; his frame was exhausted with pain; it seemed to him that if that woman, with her graceful, gliding cat-like movements, were disposed to give him a sleeping draught, so potent that he would never be called upon again to take up the burden of life, or awaken to its pains, that he should almost thank her. He received the cooling refreshing draught then with a courteous smile.

"It is delicious, my lady," he murmured.

"You shall have plenty more," responded the countess, with a gracious smile. "We shall have the doctor here presently, and he will tell us what to do. We will attend strictly to his orders."

Hammond was silent; he turned on his pillow, and strove to sleep; strove with a hundred perplexing and painful images confusing his brain; the pain in his arm grew intense; he moaned, tossed, turned his handsome flushed face from one side to the other, and still, all the while, that graceful figure in black, gold, and purple, remained within the precincts of the wide and handsome chamber. Now she would draw a curtain, now gently open a window to admit the fresh autumn air, now sprinkle some delicious perfume on the thick carpet.

Then the doctor came, felt the patient's pulse, redressed the wounded arm, ordered a draught, and stole away on tiptoe. Hammond was dimly conscious through all the fever and pain that the tenderest care was taken of him in that luxuriant chamber. It was pleasanter he owned to himself than being nursed by Aunt Danvers at Strawberry Lodge. The old lady with creaking shoes, rustling silk dress, and high pitched voice, was not the most agreeable nurse in sickness. Safe though, safe, good Aunt Danvers, thought Hammond, while he watched the gliding, cat-like countess through his half-closed lids.

"This fair lady has some object in her solicitude, what is it I wonder?"

And then he fell off into a horrible sleep, where he was pursued by the face of Rokewood.

Now was Hammond flying through dark caverns, and the secretary was coming up behind him, with breath as loud as the puffing of a steam engine; before him was the roll and uproar of the sea. Should he reach the ocean before his foe was upon him there would be only two alternatives, the murderous clutch of Rokewood upon his throat, or a plunge into the cold waters.

"The latter," urged his burning, fevered senses on.

Then he rushes and gains the cavern's mouth, a wide sullen sea stretching to the verge of a far and black horizon, a red moon getting up, and casting a lurid glare upon the waters; and far out a single boat, and seated in it a slender, white-robed figure. He knows that it is Norah. She plies her oar, she draws nearer and nearer to the cavern's mouth—but behind him he hears the roar, the trampling feet of Rokewood.

Shall he plunge into the water, and strike out to meet the boat? yes—yes. Then Norah rises up and waves her hand to him; he cannot understand if she waves her hand to him in warning or in encouragement. Nearer come the trampling footsteps.

He plunges into the waters, they close about him, and chill his very heart with their icy coldness. He strikes out nevertheless, towards the boat—strikes out, and the boat approaches him. The moonlight falls on the lovely face of Norah; she looks like an angel robed in white, her long hair falls like a curtain on her shoulder, she stands up and guides the boat towards him; the water grows suddenly hot, it seeths and foams, and seems to boil, white froth rides seething on the surface; the boat with Norah turns round and round, spins like a helpless thing, reels on the top of the water—another moment, and the engulfing waves have swallowed it out of his sight.

"Poor dear boy!" says a certain high pitched voice, "what a burning heat he is in to be sure."

Hammond comes up out of his dream to feel all the sickness of fever and pain, and to find Miss Danvers in a large lavender satin bonnet at his bedside.

The reader knows already how Miss Danvers' described her interview with her suffering nephew in her letter to Lady Viola, therefore it is not necessary to repeat it here.

Hammond objected, strongly objected to the plan of taking the Ladies Beaumont to France, but at last overcame by illness, and the vehemence of Miss Danvers' arguments, a reluctant consent was wrung from him, only he entreated to be permitted to see the Lady Norah; but here the countess blandly interposed.

"It would upset him," she said, gently; "besides what was the use of encouraging a foolish girl and boy attachment which could lead to no result save disappointment."

"The pride of these Monkhouse connections is enormous," added the countess, with her wild, glittering smile; "and surely, Miss Danvers, it will only end in bitterness. Ah, believe me, there are better things in store for your handsome, high-spirited nephew, than to be tied to a pining, sentimental, bad-tempered girl, as both these spoiled creatures are."

"Very few women are worthy of my nephew Hammond," said Miss Danvers, shaking her head in its large case of lavender satin.

The reader is aware of how Miss Danvers was subsequently tricked, of how the sisters were sent off, each in a different direction, and Philip Ruthven was compelled to fly as a fugitive from the evil representations of Rokewood. Miss Danvers did not forget to storm and scold, did not forget to call in Grosvenor Square and upbraid the countess with her falsehood and deceit. That clever woman flattered the old lady, fooled her, in fact, to the top of her heart; she even shed tears, and protested that she had been as much deceived by her uncle as Miss Danvers herself.

"Though," she added, smiling through her false tears; "it was no doubt the best thing that could happen to those headstrong girls that they should be separated."

Viola had arrived at the convent of the Sacred Heart, and the English governess, as well as the French teacher, had written to say that she appeared to be in extremely weak health—indeed, so much so that they could not expect her to study at present.

"Bless me," said Miss Danvers; "the girl seemed well enough the day I left her."

The countess shrugged her shoulders.

"It seems she took cold on the voyage. At any rate, the tenderest care will be taken of her, and, if necessary, we will pay an English physician to cross over to France and report upon her case. Norah is well, and is, Mr. Rokewood writes, in high spirits; she is at a quiet rest in Cumberland, under the care of an excellent governess."

The countess, for some hidden purpose, flattered and cajoled the good lady from Strawberry Lodge.

All this time Hammond lay between life and death, and the countess herself waited upon him with the most assiduous care; his name escaped entirely all mention in regard to the violent entry into the house of Lady Monkhouse. Sir Brook Danvers, a severe, tyrannical old man, wrote up angrily to know "if his son had been playing any mad pranks," but Miss Danvers and the countess both wrote letters to smooth the way for Hammond.

Meanwhile, bills were out offering a reward for the apprehension of impetuous and friendless Philip Ruthven. He was described as a robber, who had followed Mr. Rokewood and attempted to steal his watch and chain, both of which ornaments were found under a sand bank near Penniston Station. Things were at this crisis when the fever of poor Hammond suddenly took a favourable turn. He had been delirious for days, but one October morning, a bright day, when the sky was sweetly, deeply blue, and the air came fresh through the flowered balcony and open window into the room, he opened his eyes upon the real world once more, after having passed some weeks in the fantastic land of fever and wild delirium. A lady sat reading by his side, a lady dressed, strange to say, in white, his favourite colour.

Was it—was it Norah? Alas! no, the head is raised, and he meets the large, dark, glittering eyes of Lady Monkhouse. She arose and came towards him smiling. Her white, embroidered morning robe did not rustle. It was confined round the waist by a deep blue, sash ribbon; a piece of the same hue was wound round the lofty tower of her black hair. She approached him and took one of his handsome, wasted hands into her snowy palm. What was there in the touch that made the young man shrink, as if a snake had wound itself about him.

"I have been ill, Lady Monkhouse," said Hammond, raising himself upon his elbow; "and you have been extremely kind to me. I thank you with all my heart."

And then he remembered that he had accused this woman in his thoughts of intention to poison him, and he fancied he had done her injustice.

"You have been ill," said the countess; "but now you will soon recover again. You must travel with me to my seat on the coast. Since I am such an excellent nurse I will not resign my office until the cure is complete."

"You are too good, my lady," said Hammond. "I have no mother. My sisters are all married. Female care and kindness are therefore, I assure you, appreciated by me at their fullest value."

Lady Monkhouse smiled her glittering smile. She looked excessively handsome.

"She is handsome, certainly," mused Hammond. "She has atoned for her uncle's brutality. She has nursed me with consummate care. There must be kindness and womanly sympathy in this woman's heart at the core. Surely, when she understands my deep and desperate love for my precious darling—my Norah, she will pity me, and suffer me to visit her at her retreat in Cumberland; but I must be wise and cautious, and bring about my request by slow degrees."

Indeed, the fever had left Hammond so weak that he was unable even to talk long at a time, until several days were past.

Aunt Danvers drove in every morning from Strawberry Lodge to see her beloved nephew. The scheming countess had completely won the old lady's heart. Her devotion and kindness to Hammond was as a shining light in the estimation of Miss Danvers. One day she arrived and found Hammond dressed, and sitting in a lounging chair of crimson satin, in the boudoir of Lady Monkhouse.

Certainly, the son of Sir Brook was a model of manly beauty, his clear, brunette complexion was tinged with a faint crimson glow, the rich hair, jet black and curling, in short, crisp masculine fashion over his statue-like head, contrasted splendidly with the deep hue of the chair whereon he lounged. The countess sat opposite to him in a fanciful costume of crimson and white. She was reading aloud from a book of poems. The theme she had chosen was one of love, and Hammond, his heart aglow, his eyes afire, listened with short, panting sobs, to the passionate words.

Lady Monkhouse read with dramatic force, with impassioned fervour. Hammond thanked her when she paused.

"You read splendidly, Lady Monkhouse," said the young man.

Miss Danvers entered the room; she had been listening, spellbound, in the doorway.

"Bless me, how well the dear fellow is looking," said Miss Danvers, enthusiastically, when the first greetings were over. "Now he can come home to me to Strawberry Lodge to get well."

Hammond turned an imploring look upon the countess. The young gentleman was now fully persuaded, by her kindness to himself, that she was his warm, true friend; a woman with a tender heart and an elevated soul. He fancied that the beautiful twins, in their grief at the loss of their father, and their anger at being compelled to receive and obey a step-dame, had, in the rashness of their innocent and impetuous hearts, identified this affectionate and handsome woman (for Hammond was alive to her beauty in an artistic sense) with the infamous ruffianly secretary whose niece she had the misfortune to be.

Through all his deep anxiety for Norah he felt—now that he believed he understood the countess—a sort of assurance that if she knew all she would never suffer harm to happen to the twins, and he believed that if he journeyed with Lady Monkhouse to her seat on the coast, and there went through the agreeable role of getting well under her care, that he would enlist her sympathies completely in behalf of the lonely young creature.

"Mr. Hammond has promised me that he will journey down with me to Glen Beruyl, my sweet little nook on the Welsh coast," said the countess, with sparkling eyes. "Mr. Rokewood is still at his seat in the north, and indeed if he purposed returning, I should not urge your nephew to remain; he would find it difficult to forgive the man who wounded his arm."

"Ah, we must forgive and forget," cried Miss Danvers. "My dearest, Hammond had no business masquerading in a noblewoman's house, and mixing himself in the affairs of that dreadful Philip Ruthven. I see the police have not taken him yet."

Hammond started violently.

"The police! Philip!" he said.

"Certainly," responded the countess, calmly. "He attempted to rob Mr. Rokewood of his watch in a railway carriage, then sprang out of the door; he is hiding somewhere now."

"Impossible," cried Hammond, vehemently. "I would trust Philip with a million of money."

"Ah," cried old Miss Danvers, shaking her head, and a large new satin bonnet of rich orange colour; "that's always the way with Hammond; taken in by every scamp that makes out a good story."

Hammond protested, and warmly defended his friend. The countess appeared to fall in with his views, agreed with everything he said, and more than ever made him consider her in the light of an amiable and most charming personage. His courage arose now, and he resolved he would tell her, that very evening, how devotedly he loved Norah Beaumont; he would implore her womanly sympathy, he would entreat her to permit him to see the lady of his love.

Miss Danvers took her departure, and Hammond dined *tête-à-tête* with the countess. It was the first day he had sat up. Her ladyship made a sort of festival of the occasion. She brought forth some of the costliest gold plate, every delicacy that the season afforded was spread on the table. She cast off her morning garb entirely, and appeared in a dress of white *moiré*, and a brilliant parure of rubies. The wines, the lights, the perfume of the flowers, the presence of the beautiful woman, all in some manner aided in intoxicating the senses of Hammond, half invalid as he still was. In the countess he saw a guardian angel, and a sort of chivalrous admiration took root in his heart. When the last of the servants

had withdrawn Hammond rose up and crossed over to the countess, who sat behind a complete thicket of scarlet begonias in silver pots; smiling, sparkling, dazzling, she looked just then.

"Lady Monkhouse," said Hammond, "you have been so good to me, so gentle, kind, compassionate, sympathising, that—in fact I am emboldened to speak to you of the subject that lies deeply embedded in my heart."

And then he spoke of his love for Norah, of his deep longing to behold her once more, of his intense anxiety for her welfare; and he spoke freely, too, of Rokewood, confessed to the countess his dread and dislike of the man. At last he paused. Lady Monkhouse had turned away her head, so that he could not see her eyes nor the expression of her face. Then she spoke—looking away from him, and walking with impatient strides up and down one portion of the large apartment. The words she uttered blanched the cheek of Hammond one instant, and brought the fire almost of Hades into his eyes the next. Astonishment, wild, staring, maddening, took hold upon him. When the countess ceased to speak, the power of utterance forsook the young man for a space, and when he found his voice it was to utter in deep tones, the words:

"God help me! Would that I had died in that fever. Lady Monkhouse, I am going mad!"

(To be continued.)

SEVERAL old sepulchres have again turned up in the quarter of the Gobelins, while excavating the foundations of some houses in the new Boulevard Arago. They appear to be of high archaeological interest; the kists being of very hard stone, and covered with roughly dressed flags of the same stone. The vault measures about 5ft. 7in. in height, the arch being of rough stones laid in mortar. We remarked that there was no particular system in the disposal of the coffins; some were placed end to end, others piled one over the other; and when we saw the spot most had been removed to the catacombs; but it was plain from our examination of two, one being of very small dimensions, and containing the remains of a young child, that they were either Celtic or Gaulic;—perhaps, no relics forthcoming to denote the period. As distance lends enchantment to the view, so relics disappear by diggers.

**HAZLEWOOD CASTLE (TADCASTER, YORKSHIRE).**—A stained-glass window has lately been erected in the old chapel attached to Hazlewood Castle, in memory of the late Sir Edward M. Vavasour, Bart., (who died in 1847 on his way to Rome), and his lady, who predeceased him many years. The window (which is the gift of the Rev. Philip Vavasour, youngest son of the late baronet) consists mainly of two lancet lights, containing representations of the patron saints of the persons commemorated. In one light is a figure of St. Edward, King and Confessor, and in the other light is a figure of St. Marciana, Virgin and Martyr, both the figures standing, surrounded with their distinguishing attributes or emblems, beneath foliated canopies of characteristic design. At the top of the window is a four-pointed tracery panel, which is filled up with a monogram, and across the bottom of the two lancet lights runs the inscription. The window was executed by Mr. Francis Barnett, of Leith and Edinburgh.

**NEW WEDDING REGULATIONS.**—On the subject of weddings, some regulations have been recently enforced at Oudh which might be recommended to persons "about to marry" all over the world. The hospitalities attending these interesting events are so expensive in Oudh, and so exorbitant a fortune is exacted from the father of the bride, that the birth of a daughter is regarded as a serious misfortune in almost every class of society. Hence the practice of female infanticide against which the British Government endeavoured to make head in vain until they went to the root of the evil by enforcing a sumptuary law on all parties concerned. The following are the regulations above referred to: 1st—That no superfluous paraphernalia should be borrowed for wedding occasions. 2nd—That no money should be taken from the bride's father beyond what may suffice to entertain the bridegroom and his friends. (As a bridegroom on one occasion was accompanied by 34,000 friends, this regulation seems to apply but an imperfect remedy.) 3rd—That daughters should be given in marriage to those only of equal rank, and 4th—That the marriage expenses should not exceed one-half the annual income of the contracting parties. This last ordinance, it is said, has been received by the Rajpoot ladies with enthusiasm. They regard the mere conception of it as a most valuable discovery in social physics. Our fair countrywomen would, we trust, view the proposal with equal favour.





[A WARNING FROM THE BARONESS.]

## THE DOWAGER'S SECRET.

## CHAPTER III.

KONRAD, in much livelier spirits, found his way back to the dressing-room. Tessa had just opened the door, her cloak wrapped about her, a fleecy scarf knotted around her head.

And Count Scheffer was standing there, bending low over the little gloved hand, and evidently asking some great favour, for Tessa seemed a little confused and hesitating, and Konrad caught the words:

"Oh, how can I forsake that good old man."

He advanced quickly, and Tessa, hastily drawing away her hand from the count, ran forward to meet him.

"Here is Konrad. Oh, yes, I am ready, Konrad. Good-night, Count Scheffer!" she cried.

And she tripped lightly down the steps. The carriage was waiting, and the door was held open by an obsequious footman. Konrad put her in, and then took the seat beside her, and they passed a whole square before either spoke a word.

Then as there came a long, quivering, ecstatic sigh from the girl, Konrad said gently:

"Dear Tessa, I congratulate you from the bottom of my heart upon your great success."

"Oh, Konrad," exclaimed she with vehement emphasis; "something tells me that my part shall always lie in such beautiful places. I did not feel frightened or humble. I seemed to be assured of my equality with the best of them."

"And no wonder," answered Konrad earnestly, "beauty and genius must be Nature's gift, they cannot be purchased by rank or wealth."

"And it is certain now, isn't it? Oh, it seems like a fairy tale. There is to be no more poor, plain garments, no more self-denial and hard work, and cheerless rooms. I shall have all things beautiful. Oh, I want to see Father Franz so much. Dear, dear, Father Franz, how happy this will make him! How slow the man drives! It seems to me I could walk faster. Do tell him to go faster, Konrad, I want to get home to Gotthart and Father Franz."

"Don't be impatient, dear. I told him to drive around the great square to show you the fountain illuminated. We might as well make the most of this ride. It is not often we have such a coach at our service," returned he.

"But there will be no lack of such things in future," said the girl with a new, imperious ring in her voice. "I want to go swiftly; I feel as if I was not safe, not quite satisfied, until I had flung myself into the

arms of Father Franz, the noble, generous man who has made me what I am."

"We shall soon be there. Here is the grand square. See how the water looks like a ruby flow in that light. Now then, we are turning homeward."

She was beating against the window, impatiently, with her gloved fingers. In a little time every act and look and gesture came back significantly, but now Konrad only smiled, thinking that he was gaining with every moment of detention, a new delight and charm to the old *maestro's* surprise.

They were nearing home. The twin towers of the cathedral loomed up grandly against the clear, starlit sky; a moment more and they would be in the little cross street which extended in diagonal line from the plaza. But suddenly the coach came, with an abrupt plunge, to a stand still, and the coachman was heard swearing lustily. Konrad opened the door and leaped out just in time to save one of the forward wheels from dropping from the axle to the ground.

"Somebody has been meddling with that wheel," said the coachman fiercely.

Tessa had been leaning out from the window and heard all.

"Never mind," exclaimed she eagerly; "we are almost home. We can walk the rest of the way."

Before anyone could remonstrate she had bounded lightly to the pavement.

"It is just as well, it is so few steps," said Konrad, as a passer-by came up to ascertain the cause of the sudden pause, "this man will give you assistance and I will take the lady home."

"I am thankful to walk," said Tessa, hurrying forward. "I am half-crazed with excitement I think. It seems as if I was never—never to get there. Father Franz is watching, and Gotthart is listening with those quick ears for the roll of the coach wheels, but we shall cheat them both."

And she laughed gaily, and then suddenly she clapped her hands.

"Oh, let me cheat them. You shall go in, Konrad, at the front door, and I will slip round by the back yard and be listening, while you affect great surprise at not seeing me there. Will you?"

She seized his hand in her eagerness, and held it until he answered, yes.

So at the corner they parted, the girl with a low laugh flitting round to the rear entrance, and Konrad walking in boldly at the front door. He found the corridor bright with little Chinese lanterns, strung along the wall, and at the familiar door he stepped beneath a hastily-improvised arch of evergreen and flowers.

"Dear soul, how he has worked!" thought Konrad, and smiled over the anticipation of Tessa's surprise and pleasure. He pushed open the door and found himself in a blaze of light, and could hardly recognize the poor old room, for what with the trimming of the previous night and the generous, even prodigal decorations, which Herr Wohler and his two hired assistants had added, the place looked like a May Queen's bower.

Gotthart's chair was under the hastily hung chandelier, and his hands were filled with flowers, and by his side stood Herr Wohler, with a little ebony casket in his hand.

Both turned to Konrad their flushed, eager faces.

"Has she come? we didn't hear the coach! Wohler, don't you bring her in first, who is the queen of this festivity?"

Konrad laughingly answered, fancying the bright, merry face was pressed against the rear door listening.

"What, isn't Tessa here? I expected to find her here."

"Didn't you come with her? Why did you walk, when the coach was to bring her," asked Herr Wohler impatiently, "or did you come to help us make ready the place? There was no need, for I found two skilful assistants and every thing is done. Isn't it pretty? And won't she be pleased? I can hardly wait, I am so impatient to fold my silver-voiced darling in my arms."

Konrad examined everything deliberately, listening every second for the light rush of those eager feet.

The old *maestro* went to the window and peeped out.

"It seems to me a long time for the coach to take. You must go and help her out, Konrad. I shall seize her when she crosses the threshold; but I'm going to play the triumphal march when she is coming through the corridor."

"Why don't she come?" thought Konrad impatiently.

And presently he said he would take a look down the street, and went out, and hurrying through the passage he flung open the door. He started back, somehow, with a chill, when he found there was no soul there in the little entry.

He pushed open the outer door. The silent yard, the empty brick pavement, the clear, star-light sky. He tore around the house to the front.

"The little gipsy has gone to the front after hearing about the lanterns."

And once more he threaded the illuminated corridor, and pushed open the sitting-room door, staring blankly about him, when he found Herr Wohler and Gotthart still anxious and expectant.

"Hasn't she been in?" he stammered.  
 "Why, of course not the coach hasn't come."  
 "But she came with me; the coach wheel came off and we walked down our street. It was a frolic that she should wait at the door and listen while I came in."

"Little mischief!" exclaimed the old *maestro*, seizing a candle and hurrying out to the rear.

Konrad followed, like one in a stupor, and called sharply:

"Tessa, Tessa; come! we are waiting for you."

No response, not even the rustle of the silken skirt or the quiver of her merry, hidden laugh.

"It is very strange!" exclaimed Konrad, seizing the candle and looking in the most unthought of hiding-places.

"I wonder she can be so very imprudent. Her dress is thin, and she must know we are waiting," said the old *maestro* wistfully.

"She is hiding somewhere. She will come in a moment," said Konrad; but the hand which held the candle shook. "I'll just run out into the street a moment."

And as soon as he was out of sight of the terrified face of the old man he tore fiercely around, glancing into every shadow, and searching every nook that could possibly hold the slender figure he sought, without success. And then he walked slowly the whole length of the street, glancing sharply on either side. The hour was late, and but few people were stirring; but he asked one or two if they had seen a cloaked figure with a white scarf on her head. No; no one had seen anything.

"She is out of her hiding-place by this time," he muttered. "I shall certainly find her there now." And he ran home as fast as he could go. Father Franz met him at the door.

"Have you found her, Konrad?"

"Good heavens, sir, is she not in yet!" and his husky voice and horrified eyes told the wild alarm which began to fill his mind.

"I've been into every room and over to Frau Mona's house, and to the *Fraulein Creosens*. There is no sign nor glimpse of her," said the old man wringing his hands. "What strange, mysterious thing has spirited her away? Tell me just where you left her."

Konrad repeated his story nervously.

"It is impossible that any harm could come so near to us in such brief time, and there be never an outcry or call," he said emphatically, in conclusion.

"But where is she? She would never hide so long, was the old *maestro's* reply.

"Perhaps she has gone in now, and Gotthart and she are laughing at our alarm. Let us go back to the sitting-room."

And they went back pushing open the door with a tremor of hope and fear. There were the lights and the flowers, and the festive table, and Gotthart weeping bitterly, but no Tessa.

"This is inexplicable!" exclaimed Konrad, pressing both hands upon his forehead. "It is possible she has forgotten something, and went back to the coach to be taken again to the house of the duchess."

"In that case, she would be back in an hour," cried Gotthart, catching at the hope.

They sat down together, an anxious, troubled group, in the midst of the festive cheer of the room. But before the hour was up Konrad started up, with something between a sob and a groan choking his voice.

"I can't stand this, I will go to the house and ask." And he seized his hat and rushed away.

Two hours after he returned, looking as haggard as if he had passed through a fever.

Herr Wohler sprang up, clasped his numb hands, and looked with imploring eyes, the inquiry his frozen lips could not articulate.

"No sign, no trace. They have seen, have heard nothing," replied Konrad with a bitter groan.

"Oh, my singing bird, my rosebud!" ejaculated the old *maestro*!

And while the festive lights burnt pale and sickly before the gathering daylight these three, suddenly desolated in the very hour of their triumph, seized each other by the hand with wild, distracted looks of the most harrowing fears and the most vague horror, and repeated, as they mingled their tears together:

"Oh, Tessa, little Tessa!"

#### CHAPTER IV.

THE Baroness Grafenstein stayed in the drawing-room for the last adieux of the evening's guests, and then followed her visitor to her suite of rooms, to make sure personally of her comfort and enjoyment.

She stopped a few moments there to hear the warm eulogy of the princess upon the fair young songstress, and then repaired to her own apartments. The dressing-maid relieved her of the heavy satin

dress, removed the diadem and ornaments she had worn, helped to fasten the white sacque and skirt which replaced the cumbersome train of the party robe, and then unbound the still glossy and luxurious hair.

"Now you may go, Gretchen. I am so wide awake I shall not be able to sleep. I will sit awhile," said the mistress, kindly; "but go you to your bed."

Gretchen obeyed, and her ladyship, pushing away the loose hair from her white brows, laid her head against the high easy chair, and yielded to a pleasant reverie.

"It has been a charming success," she murmured softly. "I thank the Italian signora for her illness. I shall lose nothing by coming before Munich as the patroness of this sweet little creature. I never saw Count Scheffer so enthusiastic before."

And then she smiled, and played with the embroidered bows which fastened the white cambric skirt. And then, of a sudden, she rose and passed lightly into an adjoining chamber, and stood fluttering, with motherly love and pride, over a lace-hung couch, where a rosy boy of six lay in the sound slumber of childhood.

She waved her hand lightly as the nursery-maid lifted her head from the couch beyond, and whispered softly:

"Don't rise, Lisbet. I only came to take my good-night kiss."

And bending down over the rosy sleeper, she touched her loving lips to the moist forehead, the dewy mouth and dimpled hands.

"Good-night, my treasure, my little Max," she said, and stole back, but started, as at a spectre, when she saw a cloaked and hooded figure standing motionless and upright at the corridor door.

The next instant she recognised the dark, sorrowful face and brilliant back eyes, and exclaimed:

"My dear mother, what is the matter? Where have you been? How you startled me!"

The dowager Baroness Grafenstein dropped the mantle from her head, and silently followed the younger lady, who was the widow of her deceased son, back into the dressing-room.

"You left the drawing-room very early. I hope you were not ill," said the daughter-in-law, courteously, while her visitor seated herself in the easy-chair.

"I do not enjoy music so much as the Count Scheffer," answered the dowager, with a slight sneer.

The baroness glanced inquiringly up at the dark, cold, haughty face, but her eyes fell in confusion, meeting an earnest, piercing glance in return. She had plenty of reverence and respect for her late husband's mother, and a great deal of vague awe, but, somehow, could never force anything warm enough for affection.

"I am sorry you did not enjoy it, for everyone else is enraptured with the gifted young singer."

"Who brought her forward?" asked the other, in a cold, abrupt voice. "Was it one of your absurd philanthropies?"

"Not at all. I had engaged the signora, who was taken ill, and the director found an old *maestro*, who promised me this young *débütante* in her place. I must confess I am quite as delighted as the others."

"Not quite as much as Count Scheffer," was the chilling reply.

"I don't understand you," faltered the baroness.

"Pshaw! don't try to deceive me, Hildegarda. You could never hide a single thought from me. If you had not been so absorbed with the doll's face and smooth voice of that girl, you would have seen that the count was falling desperately in love with her."

"Well," said the baroness, trying to assume an indifferent air; "if it should be so, I do not know that will be harm or blame to me. I remember, however, that the count is always carried away with good music."

"Do not flatter yourself it is the music. I tell you it is the girl herself," was the fierce, vehement rejoinder.

"Well?"

And the baroness bent down to smooth out a crumpled bow.

"If you believed it, you would not say well," retorted the dowager, in a still angrier tone.

Upon which the baroness looked up with a smile.

"I really believe you are jealous of the girl. Can it be that it is for my sake, my dear mother, when hitherto you have so persistently frowned upon the count's attentions?"

The dowager was biting nervously at the thin and bloodless lip, and twisting and untwisting her pale, long fingers.

"I do not say that I wish you to marry again, not yet at least. But I will not have the count taking up that girl. He is a resolute, determined man, and has Quixotic notions. He followed her carriage to-night. I saw him."

"You saw him! You have not been out alone in the street this chilly evening?"

"My head ached, and I went out on the balcony," was the somewhat evasive reply.

But a moment afterwards she said eagerly: "Hildegarda, I want to know if the count has come yet. Some one came and went into his rooms just now, but I was not soon enough to see whether it was master or valet. Can you make an excuse to send and see? That is what I want of you, Hildegarda."

Her ladyship looked extremely surprised, but she rose promptly, and rang the bell.

"Henrik," said she, quietly, when the servant came, handing him a slip of paper on which he had written a single line, take that to Count Scheffer's room, and ask, if he has not retired, to have him write a line in reply."

The servant was gone a few moments, and returned.

"The count is not in, your ladyship. His valet says he went down the street, and has not yet returned."

"That will do, then."

And as the servant retreated, the baroness turned to look at her mother-in-law, and was not only alarmed but completely mystified to see her with compressed lips and angry eyes striking her hands together fiercely.

Before she could ask any explanation, the dowager hurried out, and the still youthful and pretty baroness followed far enough to see her fling herself by the bed of little Max, muttering fierce, wild words of passionate endearment. She then retreated softly, and locked her chamber door.

"She grows stranger and stranger, murmured her ladyship, dropping into the easy-chair, with a little perturbed sigh. "If I was not sure of her unstinted devotion to little Max I should be afraid of her. What did she see about the count's absence to anger her in this way? And why does she seek to rouse my vigilance in regard to this young girl? I never could see that she had any affection whatever for me; the warmest interest in because I was the wife of her deceased son, the mother of the living heir of Grafenstein. I have trembled at the thought of her anger should there come a declaration from the Count Scheffer, and I be tempted to accept. But about the sweet young singer, she cannot sting me to jealousy. He is infatuated with music, but he is one of the proudest men in the land, and it must be gentle blood which flows in the veins of the bride he chooses."

And here the baroness smiled softly, and glanced into the great swinging mirror in front of her, with shyly questioning eyes.

At that moment she heard a softly gliding step along the outer hall—a step that would scarcely have been detected but for the rustle of some garment brushing against the wall.

The baroness turned her head, and listened again.

"I will go and see," thought she; and passing through the inner door into her chamber she slid back the bolt softly, and by a sudden movement flung open that door, in time to catch a very singular tableau.

At the other end of the broad hall, where the great staircase ended, stood the Count Scheffer, with one foot still on the last stair. A light cloak thrown hastily over his dress suit was glittering with what seemed raindrops, as if he had just come in from a heavy shower. His hat was crushed, his hair disordered, and a white handkerchief was knotted around one hand.

Just in front of him, with one arm outstretched, as in warning or threatening, stood the dowager Baroness Grafenstein, her tall, thin figure looking almost spectrally high, her black eyes flashing angrily, her thin, sarcastic lip curled with a fierce smile.

"My lord, the count, wanders late in the street," said she, in a low, hissing voice. "You thought, perhaps, to come in unperceived, and that no one be aware of these would wanderings. Do you not know the symbol of the house of Grafenstein—a hawk's eye, that watches, and does not sleep?"

The count was evidently startled, but he did not lose his self-possession.

"Aye, your ladyship; I remember it. But is the hawk's eye supposed to follow the private affairs of other lives? I thought it kept sole guard over the Grafenstein rosella. The Scheffer dove, when roused to wrath, has a beak as well as the hawk."

The baroness eyed him sullenly.

"Where have you been, Count Scheffer? What low brawl have you meddled with and obtained your deserts?"

The count's eye flashed, although he sought to give his voice a playful *nonchalance* of tone.

"Noble baroness, if you please, I have not yet chosen a lady confessor. I would fain choose deliberately. And I am keeping you in this chilly corri-



der. I beg your pardon, and wish your ladyship a most courteous good-night."

As he spoke, the count stepped nimbly on one side of the black-robed figure, bowed twice, and crossing hastily, turned into his own suite of apartments.

The baroness retreated as noiselessly as possible into her chamber, and did not wait to watch her mother-in-law, standing there motionless as a stone statue, gazing grimly and darkly at the door through which Count Scheffer had made good his escape.

The first movement of the Baroness Hildegarde was to pass swiftly to the window, push up the sash, and look out. The stars were shining brightly in a clear and cloudless sky.

She put out her head. Not the faintest moisture—not even of dew.

"That is strange, murmured she, thoughtfully; "yet his cloak was wet, as with rain."

And she bent out and looked down at the broad flagstones in the yard, which the great lamp in the iron lamp-post revealed plainly. They also were clean and dry.

"It has not rained to-night, certainly. It is very strange," she murmured again.

And while yet she stood at the open window, looking down she heard a quick, springing step echoing along the side walk, and saw a man push open the night gate, and cross hastily to the door beneath her.

Something in the sharp peal of the bell gave her a nervous impression of some sad or startling news, and she listened intently, until the porter came up stairs, and knocked at her door.

Her hand trembled as she opened it.

"Speak to her ladyship, Gretchen," began he; and then recognising the baroness, he added, in respectful tones:

"The young man has come back, your ladyship—the young man who brought the singer. He wants to know if the young lady came back here. She is missing, and cannot be found anywhere, and her friends are much alarmed."

"Missing!" ejaculated the Baroness Hildegarde in dismay; "how can it be? Did she not go in the coach? Show him into the warmest room, and I will come down to speak with him."

She turned to find a mantle, flung it over her head to hide the floating hair, and wound it across her shoulders, then went down the stairs softly, relieved to find no signs of the dowager's espionage.

Konrad, with piercing, glittering eyes, and pale cheek, stood in the centre of the room awaiting for her. The anguished glance told her how every instant of delay tortured him.

"I have seen nothing of the dear child," said she, gently; "nothing at all since she left us, and went away in the coach. Tell me how you came to lose sight of her."

Konrad, forgetting all his awe of the noble baroness, in short, terse sentences, related the story.

"Oh," said the lady, in a tone of relief; "nothing alarming could have happened. You would have heard an outcry of some sort. It is a girlish frolic. You will find her with some of her young friends, near your home. It was natural that she should wish to share her pleasant evening's experience with a sympathizing woman."

"No, it was not natural," groaned Konrad; "if she could not pour out her thoughts to Father Franz or Gotthart, whither would she go?"

"I am persuaded that you will find her in the morning. If you were with her to the very door, how could any harm have happened?"

"At least, there is no good in my remaining here," said Konrad, drearily; and he hurried towards the door.

When he was there, with his hand on the silver knob, he suddenly spoke, in a smothered, husky voice, his face turned so that she could not read its expression.

"There was a gentleman here to-night. Will your ladyship be good enough to say if Count Scheffer sleeps here, if he is in the house now?"

Her ladyship's cheek flushed hot with mingled anger and resentment, but she answered promptly:

"He is a guest of mine. I saw him a few moments ago. He is at this moment in the left suite of the right wing. Would you like to speak with him?"

"No, no, thank your ladyship. I am half dazed and bewildered with this fright. I will go back again. I am sorry at disturbing your ladyship, and thank you warmly for your kindness;" returned poor Konrad, in a dreary tone.

And he hurried away out of the grand mansion which so little time before had witnessed Tessa's triumph.

He turned, and looked back upon it, when he had cleared the gates.

"Oh, I had the foreboding then that trouble was coming. You brought a black shadow to my heart,

though you were so bright with light and gaiety, when I led our beautiful darling across your threshold," he cried, shaking his clenched fist at the house.

The baroness went back to her room, and sat down, panting and breathless.

"He also!" she gasped—"what did he mean? Why did he ask for Count Scheffer?"

(To be continued.)

## THE HAMPTON MYSTERY.

### CHAPTER XXI.

This is no transient flash of fugitive passion—  
His death hath been my life for years of misery,  
Which else I had not lived.  
Upon that thought, and not on food, I fed.  
Upon that thought, and not on sleep, I rested.  
Maturin.

AFTER the departure of Lord Adlowe, the Marquis Trevalyan leaned back comfortably in his easy-chair, reposing his grizzled head on his cushions, while Giralda, in obedience to his request, read aloud to him the news in the daily papers. He watched her furtively from under his gray and heavy brows, and once or twice he started as she lifted her splendid eyes to his. They were haunting eyes to him, and he was angry with himself for the memories they suggested. The reading over, he dictated two or three business letters, and expressed his satisfaction at the clear and beautiful penmanship in which they were framed.

"There! You've done enough for to-day," he said, when the letters had been sealed and addressed. "You look pale, child. I meant this first day should be a holiday, but you see how selfish I am. Now put on your hat, and take a run through the park. The fresh air will do you a great amount of good."

He accompanied his suggestions with a kindly look, which sat strangely on his cynical face, and which warmed the heart of Giralda.

She complied with his counsel, going to her own room for her hat and wrappings.

She found the housekeeper in her chamber, busily stirring the great and flaming fire, and adding fresh fuel to it. An air of pleasant comfort had been imparted to the large apartment; a few books on swinging shelves had been added, besides an easy lounge and a luxurious crimson-cushioned chair of modern manufacture.

Mrs. Plumpton looked up eagerly as the young girl entered.

"I am going out for a little turn in the park," said Giralda, pleasantly, "Won't you come with me, Mrs. Plumpton? I need a guide."

The housekeeper gladly assented, and her eyes asked the question she did not venture to put into words.

"I have said nothing to his lordship yet about his nephew," said Giralda, answering the look. "It is too soon for me, a perfect stranger, to speak to Lord Trevalyan upon a subject of which he must think me ignorant. When the opportunity comes to urge mercy and forgiveness on Lord Trevalyan's part towards your young master, I will improve it. But it is likely that such an opportunity will come to me, his lordship's hired secretary?"

"It will," declared the housekeeper, earnestly. "My lord is a strange gentleman. For all his great pride, he talks to his valet and to me about Master Geoffrey in a way that makes my blood boil. He will talk so to you. He is never weary of talking against my poor young master. Before to-morrow night he will have told you the story himself. It is his mania."

"When he gives me the chance, I will speak in favour of this poor Geoffrey Trevalyan," said Giralda, with a quiet resolution.

As she spoke, the maiden looked up at the fair, boyish portrait of the marquis' nephew, with its wondrous blue eyes, so like the eyes of her own father, and the promise she had given became in her sight a sacred vow.

Mrs. Plumpton did not urge the subject farther, but having murmured her gratitude, retired to prepare herself for her walk. She returned a few minutes later, completely equipped, and the two strolled out under the pines, among which the winds wailed and roared in fitful gusts.

Lord Trevalyan watched them from the window of his apartment.

Not a movement of the young stranger's slight and graceful figure, as she flitted up and down the rough, ill-kept paths, escaped his notice. He did not speak his thoughts, but once or twice he sighed heavily.

and the cynical look in his dark eyes gave place to one of utter sadness.

He was himself again when Giralda returned from her walk, scrupulously polite and courteous, yet brimming over with sarcastic observations, which, had they been aimed at Giralda would have been rude.

The young girl made his tea in his little bright parlour, shared his repast, and soon after retired to the solitude of her own chamber.

Here the fortitude that had thus far sustained her gave way, and she sank down on the rug before the fire, sobbing piteously in childlike fashion.

The fact that she was a stranger in a strange place forced itself upon her consciousness in the most vivid manner. A doubt as to whether she had done right in secretly leaving her happy home and her tender relatives gave a deeper sting to her anguish. A longing to see the dear and loving faces she had left possessed her.

"Oh, mamma! oh, papa!" she moaned. "It was to help you I came away. Had we been rich enough to keep mamma at home, I should never, never have left you. It was to relieve you of your burden, to help educate Herbert that I resolved to earn something. I know I must have done right, by the pain I suffer. Surely the path of wrong-doing is pleasanter than this! Oh, my dear parents! My darling brothers!"

A perfect tempest of sobs shook her little figure.

"I suppose mamma suffers like this a great deal," she thought, when she had grown calmer. "I am sharing her burden now. All I desire in this world is, to make my dear ones happier. When I shall have gained a little sum of money—when I can give mamma my first year's salary—I will go home. How proud they will be of me when I pour so much gold into their hands! Dear mamma! she shall not work so hard after this year!"

The sunlight of hope began to dry the tears in her dusky eyes; but the grief—the first that had ever darkened her young life—could not be dispelled even by a hopeful view of the future, and Giralda at last crept between the sheets of her high bed, and cried herself to sleep.

It was a very grave little face she brought to the breakfast table the next morning in the Marquis' little parlour. Her bright-hued merino, with a dainty cambric ruffle at the neck, lent a faint colour to her pale and delicate cheeks. Her dusky ripples of hair were brushed away from her girlish brows, and in her changeable blue eyes nestled a thousand sorrowful shadows. Yet she forced a pitiful little smile that must have touched Lord Trevalyan's heart, although he gave no token of having noticed it.

The breakfast things had just been cleared away when Rigby, Lord Trevalyan's nurse and valet, entered the room bearing the small mail-bag for which he had been over to Trevalyan village.

His lordship unlocked the bag, emptying out several London morning papers.

"No letters, eh?" he said, tossing the bag to his attendant. "You may go, Rigby."

The valet bowed, and withdrew.

"Shall I read to you, my lord?" asked the maiden, reaching out her hand for the journals.

"Not yet, child," replied his lordship, gravely.

"I want want a little talk with you first. How came your parents to let such a child as you go out into the world to earn her own living? It is monstrous—absolutely monstrous! Some people have no perceptions of right and wrong—no common-sense. Now you were just as likely, in answering in person an advertisement, to fall into the hands of a designing wretch as to meet a gentleman old enough to be your grandfather."

"Oh, no," said Giralda, quickly. "The advertisement said an 'elderly' gentleman."

"Gray hairs do not always cover virtuous heads," declared the marquis. "I quite shudder to think what fate might have been yours. You are sacred in my sight. But other people might not respect your childlike innocence. Your parents must be either the most heartless or imprudent of people, and—"

"It is not so," interposed Giralda, half frightened, half indignant. "They did not want me to come. They would never have let me come. I came away without their knowledge."

"Without their knowledge?" ejaculated the marquis.

"Yes, my lord," answered the maiden, resolutely striving to conquer the quavering of her voice and looking up at his lordship with a brave and truthful gaze. "My father writes books. My mother is an actress, or singer, in London. I have been well-educated, and a great deal of money has been spent

upon me. I have a brother who wants to be sent to a university. Why should I not try to send him there? At least I could help pay his expenses, and so in part return my parents' goodness to me! I came away from a sense of duty. It was right for me to work, if it was right for mamma!"

The marquis looked at the flushing, honest, lovely little face for several minutes in silence,

"You are a little heroine—a brave, true little soul!" he said slowly, at last. "I didn't know that there was a being in the world capable of such self-sacrifice. You love your home and your parents, then?"

"Love them!"

The light that leaped to Giralda's glorious eyes, and the glow that overspread her face, told how much she loved the dear ones she had left.

"If I had not loved them so much, I could never have left them!" she added, simply.

"You said your father was of Spanish birth. Where does he live? Where is the home you have left?" Giralda hesitated, reluctant to answer.

"Never mind!" said the marquis. "You need not tell me unless you choose. I will respect your wish to keep it secret. I comprehend that your whereabouts is as yet a secret from your friends. But you should write to them at once, to spare them unnecessary alarm and search."

"I do not wish to write until I can prove to papa and mamma that I am capable of earning my own support and helping them!" returned the young girl. "To write now would be to spoil everything. They would take me home, to become again a burden on their energies. I am old enough to work for myself, and I want to prove the fact to them!"

"Very well," commented the marquis. "Take your own course. Such a wise little head must know what is best. The circumstances concerning your departure from home, and the necessity for that departure, are so very strange that I don't feel competent to advise you. Indeed, I think your conduct highly commendable under the present state of your family affairs. In what theatre does your mother act?"

"I don't know, my lord. Papa and we live out of town and mamma comes home every week. She never told us what theatre she acts in. She does not like us to question her on the subject."

"Ah! she doubtless looks for a higher sphere for her children!" remarked Lord Trevalyan, carefully changing the position of his gouty foot. "She does not want them to be attracted to the stage. Quite right and proper. A woman may be pure and good and noble and still be an actress, but, after all, in my opinion, an innocent young girl has no place before the footlights! The praise and adulation she would inevitably receive, if she chanced to be beautiful, must be harmful, and her greatest charm, her modesty, which is to her what the down is to the peach, the purple bloom to the plum, must be brushed off by this constant exposure to the rude gaze of the multitude! If I had a daughter I should rather see her buried than to see her rant upon the stage of a theatre. Your mother is wise, child, in selecting for her children a lot different to that which training or necessity has imposed upon herself. What name does she act under? Her own?"

"Oh, no, my lord! She is a countess. Papa is a Spanish count. She has kept his name off the stage. I do not know her stage name!"

"Humph!" said the marquis. "I'd like to see her. I might have asked my nephew about the London actresses—still that would have done no good. He has not been to a theatre since his return to England, of course. By the way, child," he added, "what is your opinion of Lord Adlowe?"

He looked at her keenly.

"I have formed no opinion of him, my lord," answered Giralda.

"Did you like him?"

The young girl hesitated.

"I see you don't!" remarked his lordship. "I fancied he was more startled by your looks than he would have made apparent. He thought your eyes similar to those of one he and I once knew. Look up, child. Let me see them fully."

Giralda obeyed, turning the full splendour of her eyes upon him.

He started, and grew pale.

"I noticed the resemblance yesterday," he said. "They are even more like than I thought! It is a strange coincidence. I never saw a pair of eyes similar to his before!"

He moved uneasily in his chair, yet did not stir his gaze from that of the maiden.

"You have an honest nature!" he remarked, after

a pause. "Your soul is as clear as crystal! I thought his was once! Heaven! How I loved that boy! I was stern and cold to all the world—stern and cold to him, perhaps—but I tell you there was a time when his smile, his laugh, the lightest tones of his voice, had power to stir my soul! I made an idol of him, although he thought me harsh and stern. I would have died if my death would have made the boy happier. And he repaid me! The ingrate! The coward!"

He hissed these epithets as if hurling them at the memory of the boy he had loved.

"Who was he?" asked Giralda, in a trembling voice.

"He was my nephew—my brother's son—Geoffrey Trevalyan!" said the old marquis, his face darkening, and his eyes flashing stormily. "He was a fair, roguish little fellow when he first came to me, an orphan, full of gay, childish pranks. Many a time he has laid his little golden head on my breast, or on my knee, and dropped into childish slumbers. Who would have believed then that his nature was all evil? He grew older, but his sunny nature did not change, although he grew to feel an awe of me, which I vainly tried to dispel. He became the best rider and shot in the county. He could play and sing like a music-master. He learned languages as readily as he did mischief. Everyone loved him. The very dogs loved him. To this day, Plumpton, the housekeeper, worships his memory. And I—I adored him!"

The marquis' voice faltered, and a deadly pallor momentarily displaced the angry flush on his cheeks.

"I suppose I was hard on the boy—I will acknowledge that!" his lordship resumed after a pause, the flush burning fiercely again. "Adlowe, my sister's son, and Geoffrey's cousin, was the boy's constant companion and friend. Adlowe was a slow, cautious, scheming sort of youth. He never imposed on me, though he thinks he did. It was he who first led Geoffrey into extravagant habits. That fact I have discovered since; but it is of little account. The lad must have been made of poor stuff if he could easily be led from the right path. I have no respect for a yielding milk-and-water nature!"

"Poor Geoffrey!" sighed Inez.

Lord Trevalyan looked at her in angry surprise.

"Listen!" he cried. "You shall learn if he was worth your pity! One day I refused Geoffrey money. I deemed it necessary to bring him up to Spartan habits of economy, thinking he would not then be so likely to squander my wealth, of which he was to be the heir. The night after that refusal he came to my bedchamber, robbed my strong-box, and stood over me with a dagger to murder me. He tried to accomplish the murder. He aimed at my heart, but the dagger went into my shoulder. I sprang up, but he stood before me as vacant of face, as immovable of form, as a statue. He seemed stupefied. Adlowe came in, and the servants followed, alarmed by the noise. Fool that I was, I let him go from my house unmolested! Oh, the assassin! The viper I warned to sting me!"

"You never saw him again?" asked Giralda.

"Never! He went to London to see his betrothed—the Lady Beatrice Hampton. She must have given him money. Repented my lenity, and set a detective on Geoffrey's track. He fled to the Brazils, and died there. It was fortunate for him he died. If he had lived, he should have been punished with the utmost rigour of the law. When I think how I loved him, I hate him with an awful hatred."

Lord Trevalyan's eyes were full of that hatred at that moment. Giralda was frightened at his vehemence, and shrank from the scorching radiance of his glances.

"I have seen his picture," she said, in a fluttering voice. "The housekeeper gave me Mr. Trevalyan's room. He had a beautiful face. I don't believe he could have dreamed of such a thing as murder."

"Didn't I tell you I caught him stabbing me?" cried the marquis.

"I know, I know!" answered Giralda, the assertion coming like a wet blanket upon her generous resolve to plead for Geoffrey. "But might not there have been some mistake? Are you sure he meant to murder you?"

"Well," replied Lord Trevalyan, with a sardonic curl of his lip, "he might have had other motives in cutting into me. He might have taken a freak to study surgery, and thought to begin his career by dissecting me! He might have been momentarily insane. But the fact that if I had died he would have been Lord Trevalyan, with forty thousand a year, makes me incline to the opinion that he meant nothing but murder."

Giralda's brave and resolute face clouded. The remembrance of the pictured eyes of Geoffrey Trevalyan, however, sustained her sinking faith and courage.

It almost seemed to her, remembering those eyes, so like those of Count Arvalo, that she was pleading for her own father.

How little she dreamed that the chance thought hit the truth—that she was indeed pleading for her own cruelly wronged father!

"My lord," she said, "since you have spoken to me so freely concerning your nephew, I want to say something to you. I don't believe Geoffrey ever meant to harm you. I can't explain how he happened to stab you. It might have been a wild impulse in a moment of madness. But, my lord," she added bravely, "whether he was innocent or guilty, I do not think you did quite right."

"How so? You are the first to intimate that I was ever to blame, except for my lenity. Perhaps you mean I should have punished him on the spot, instead of letting him go?"

"I do not mean that. You knew he was a spirited lad, generous and high-souled. He was your heir, not by your own will, but by the law of entail, as you were your father's heir. I don't think you did right to keep him upon a miserly allowance. If you loved him, you should have shown him that you did. It is not manly to be ashamed of an honest affection. If you had treated him with fatherly confidence, if you had let him see that you cared for him he might have been here to-day the light of your household."

The marquis stared at the lovely, flushed face in bewildered astonishment.

"Mrs. Plumpton told you to say this!" he exclaimed.

"No, my lord," replied Giralda. "Mrs. Plumpton asked me to speak a kind word in behalf of her young master, if I could, but she did not tell me what to say. I have spoken from my own head and heart."

"You have spoken as no one ever spoke to me before," said his lordship. "Plumpton dare not speak so, and Adlowe and my valet always go beyond even me in denunciations of Geoffrey. I am not offended, child. Your generous prattle pleases me. I was as generous myself once, before I knew the world."

He smiled sadly and bitterly.

"Is it not possible that you have been somehow deceived?" asked Giralda, gently. "Lord Adlowe according to your own knowledge, was not a fit adviser or friend for Mr. Geoffrey. May he not have planned that affair of the murder? He has ever since been inflaming your mind against Mr. Geoffrey. He loved Mr. Geoffrey's betrothed wife, and has told you that she is going to marry him. Was it not to his interest to remove Mr. Geoffrey from his path?"

"It is possible," assented the marquis. "Almost anything is possible. But," he added, significantly, "it isn't probable. Adlowe hadn't such a long head as you intimate he might have possessed. I know that Geoffrey tried to kill me. We get back to that point every time. I caught him in the act of stabbing me."

"And will you go down to your grave merciless and unforgiving?" asked Giralda, solemnly, her beautiful features glowing with a tender pity for him whose cause she pleaded. "Granting that he meant to murder you, and that you could never be friends with him again, can you not forgive him? Jesus forgave those who murdered him! Oh, my lord, if Geoffrey Trevalyan should still be living in some foreign country penitent for that intended crime, would you not pardon him?"

"Never—never!" cried Lord Trevalyan, springing to his feet, regardless of his infirmities, and looking down at the maiden with blazing eyes. "Never! though he grovelled in the dust at my feet—though he repented in sackcloth and ashes! If he lives I will bring him to punishment. Even if he were my own son, and his punishment would cover my name with disgrace and kill me with grief, I would still send him to penal servitude for his monstrous crime! Is it possible that he lives—that the proofs of his death, as Adlowe has sometimes feared, were forged? Speak, girl!" and his accents grew furious. "Who are you? How came you with Geoffrey Trevalyan's eyes? Are you sent here by him? Are you his daughter, that you plead for him so?"

He towered before her in his rage like a colossus. His eyes seemed to Giralda almost to emit darting flames. His face, pallid as death, was crossed by two livid streaks that glowed like recent blows. He seemed, in his awful, insane fury, with his hatred



seething hotly through his veins, like an incarnate demon.

"Speak, girl!" he repeated. "What are you to Geoffrey Trevelyan?"

#### CHAPTER XXII.

Do not, for one repulse, forego the purpose  
That you resolved to effect. *Shakespeare.*

For a moment, Giralda was appalled by the storm she had so innocently evoked. The frightful, passion-marked countenance of the marquis terrified her. His suspicious glances aroused her indignation.

She arose from her chair and confronted Lord Trevelyan, every clear-cut feature of her superlatively lovely face instinct with a haughty rebuke. An air of dignity was enthroned on her spirited face.

"My lord," she said, "I fear, from your manner, that you forget one of two things—either that you are a gentleman, or that I am a lady!"

His lordship stared at her as if confounded.

"And so," continued the young girl, with a slight inclination of her dusky little head, "you will permit me to retire."

She took a step towards the door.

The marquis, rebuked by her calm gentleness, and ashamed of his rage, began to get the better of it.

"Stay!" he said, with a marked change of tone, speaking with courtly politeness. "I beg your pardon for my roughness, Miss Arevalo. Receive my apologies, and do not go!"

Giralda bowed in acceptance of his apologies, and retraced the step she had made.

"Whoever and whatever you are, I should not vent my roughness upon a delicate little creature like you!" said his lordship. "But tell me; what are you to Geoffrey Trevelyan?"

"Nothing whatever," replied the maiden. "I never heard his name till yesterday."

"And you are not his daughter?" asked the marquis, suspiciously. "Your eyes are copies of his—"

"I am not Geoffrey Trevelyan's daughter. My father is a Spanish nobleman," declared Giralda, haughtily. "I have made the assertion several times. I know nothing of Geoffrey Trevelyan save what I chanced to hear at the village inn, and afterwards within these walls."

The marquis began to grow cooler.

"Pardon me," he said, "but you suggested that he might be living—"

"Because the housekeeper in her heart believed her young master living," responded Giralda, "and desired me to soften your heart towards him, so that he might not meet a fearful reception should he return in your lifetime."

All the vengeful hatred died out of Lord Trevelyan's face.

He even smiled as he sank back into his chair, although the smile became a grimace as he restored his gouty foot to its cushions.

"That's an old notion of Mrs. Plumpton's," he said. "She used to say so often, directly after we got the news of Geoffrey's death, but of late years she has said nothing to that effect. And it is to one of Mrs. Plumpton's vagaries—and a pair of dark blue eyes—that I owe this fine scene. I must have entertained you finely, child, if I had not frightened you. Forgive me, and sit down again."

Giralda resumed her seat quietly.

"You won't bear malice against me for having acted like a madman?" inquired his lordship, in a tone more kind than he had before employed in addressing her. "If you won't," and he smiled, "you shall be free to utter all the daring things you will! You shall be the Una to lead me. I suppose I should answer very well for a lion."

He smiled, but Giralda remained grave.

"You don't know, child," said the marquis, in a changed voice, after a pause, "how Geoffrey's wickedness cut into my soul. And you cannot blame me for having an utter horror of his succeeding me as my heir! What goaded me to that insane fury, was the thought—which I have had before—that Geoffrey may be hiding somewhere in disguise, and that, when I shall be dead, he will come and claim my titles and inheritance. I believe that if such a thing were to occur I should rise from my grave in horror. I cannot bear that he who has so injured me shall profit by my death—that he shall revel in my wealth, make merry within these walls, and revile my memory when I am gone."

Giralda's sweet face began to grow pitying.

"Such a thing could never be," she said shuddering.

"It would be, if he lived. But he is dead! I am sure of that. Yet, despite my conviction, I feel

somehow uneasy," his lordship added. "I should like to see that detective Adlowe employed years ago to ferret out Geoffrey. I have a good mind to go up to London. This is Friday. I think I'll go up to town on Monday. My foot is well enough for the journey. I've several matters of business to see to and shall probably spend a week there. Will you go too, Miss Arevalo? I think you said, last evening, that you had never been there!"

Giralda hesitated. London, where so much of her mother's time was spent, was a great "unknown land" to her. She had read of its vastness, of its grand monuments and wonderful sights, and to see it had been one of her girlish dreams.

"I don't know that I ought to go, my lord," she said, frankly. "If mamma had wished me to see London she would have taken me there herself."

"She might not have been able to do so without introducing you into a circle of actresses and actors, and so preferred you should remain at home remarked Lord Trevelyan. "Did she ever say anything prohibitory against your visiting London?"

"No, my lord; but she has said she would not have me go alone for worlds!"

"You will not go alone," said his lordship. "It would please me to take you there, and to show you the many sights of the metropolis. I am not so hardened that I cannot enjoy the pleasure your fresh young nature would derive from those strange sights and scenes. You have been told, perhaps, that I am miserly and heartless. It is not so. I have a heart yet under all this cynicism and roughness. As to my miserliness, I have little to spend money for. My wants are few. Many servants in the house would be an annoyance to me. I have no taste now for a grand establishment. No one in the whole world loves me. Why should I not live by myself, then, and gratify my tastes?"

He laid his head back on the bright cushions of his chair, and looked wearily and sorrowfully at his young companion.

Giralda thought within herself that he was, after all, a grand looking old man.

He had a majestic head, from which waved his thick masses of grizzled hair. His face had a commanding look. Every feature was full of power and strength. He was one of the leonine type of men.

"There's nobody in the world too poor to be loved!" said Giralda, shyly, with swift blushes, fearing that she might seem to be teaching this old man, whose years were more than four times her own. "All that is necessary is to be loving!"

Lord Trevelyan's keen black eyes read her innocent, lovely face.

"Could you love me?" he asked, abruptly. "I mean as your father, or grandfather. I am seventy-five years old. Perhaps I should be past all tender emotions at my age, but the heart is a strange thing! While it continues to pulsate, it must yearn for some form or other of affection. The only form I desire is of the filial description. You have already taken possession of my heart, Giralda. I wonder if your parents would consent, if you would let me adopt you as my granddaughter."

Giralda echoed the words.

"Yes," said his lordship, gravely. "I would like to have some sweet young face about me while I live. I yearn at times to hear the laughter of children and the tramp of childish feet. Perhaps I am foolish, but who ever gets over being foolish in some respect? I never saw a face I loved better at first sight than yours. I never saw a being I trusted and believed in more. If I were to adopt you, you need not give up your relatives. They should be privileged to come and see you when you chose. You should have all the rights and privileges that would be accorded my own grandchild, if I had one. I have saved a fortune out of my income, that I am free to give where I choose. I would give you all these savings at my death. Will you become to me as a granddaughter, then, Giralda?"

"You are very good, my lord," said Giralda, her face glowing. "I would not have to give up papa, nor mamma, nor Herbert, nor Fay?"

"Not one of them."

"And I could educate Herbert out of the money you will give me?" asked the young girl, with dancing eyes. "I can let mamma stay at home all the time? I may do whatever I like with the money?"

"Yes, child, whatever you like. I would settle a sufficient income upon you the day I legally adopt you to gratify all these generous wishes!"

Giralda sprang from her chair, glowing with joy, and approached the old marquis, her violet eyes dewed with tears.

"Then I will be your granddaughter!" she said, her voice trembling with grateful joy. "I will live with you, and do my best to make you happy. And—and," she added, "I will love you, Lord Trevelyan, for your great kindness."

She stood before him, trembling and blushing for a single moment, and then, obeying her grateful impulse, she came closer to him and dropped a shy, fluttering kiss upon his forehead.

She was astonished at the result of her childlike and innocent caress.

The tears sprang to Lord Trevelyan's eyes, and his face was convulsed as with sudden anguish.

No one had given him a kiss for many years. Giralda's pure and dewy caress brought back to him the childish kisses of the boy who had slept in his bosom, whose supposed wickedness had broken his heart.

"Child with the eyes I love," he whispered "from this moment you and I are bound together with a tie which can never be broken!"

He drew her to him gently, and pressed upon her forehead a fatherly, reverent kiss—a caress that was the seal to their new relations.

"I will see your mother when we go up to town," said Lord Trevelyan. "I will look for her in the theatres, and she shall accompany us to see your father! I must see Herbert and Fay too. Who knows, Giralda, but that I shall have a little family around me in my old age. Your father and I will visit together and talk of Spain, and next year I will open my town-house and introduce you into society. I am quite impatient to see these dear parents of yours!"

"I am impatient to have you see them, my lord!" said Giralda. "How joyful mamma will be! How glad papa will be when I bring you to them! And mamma will have to work no more. She can be at home always! And Herbert's dearest wish can be gratified. Oh, Lord Trevelyan, I will be very good to you for your great and unparalleled generosity to me!"

"You say nothing of your own wants and dreams," said his lordship, smiling. "You are a generous little creature to think of everyone else, first!"

"Ah, no, I am not so generous!" said Giralda, naively. "I have mentioned the things I want most. They are my dearest wishes, and their fulfilment will render me perfectly happy."

"It don't take much to make a young heart happy," mused the marquis. "Money at my age is of little account, and yet what seems to me so small a thing makes your face glow like the sunlight! We must see what else it will do. It is because I think so little of money, Giralda, that people call me miserly. They don't know how to distinguish between the love of it and the utter indifference to it. But from this time forth they shall call me so no longer. I have an object upon which to expend it—an object which may give an interest to the few years I may have to remain, and which I had thought would prove so burdensome."

Again, with beaming eyes, Giralda expressed her gratitude for his generous promises.

The morning was spent in conversation, and when dinner was announced at one, Lord Trevelyan accompanied his young secretary to the dining-room, looking so rejuvenated that Plumpton, who waited at table, assisted by Rigby, stared at his lordship in wondering surprise.

The valet shared her astonishment, but did not seem so well pleased with the change in his master as did the worthy Plumpton.

He evidently considered Giralda's growing influence with his lordship as boding him evil.

After dinner Lord Trevelyan, using his lame foot quite well, escorted Giralda back to the parlour.

The young secretary read the morning paper aloud, wrote a letter, at his dictation, to engage suitable rooms at the London hotel where his lordship usually stopped, and afterwards played and sang to her employer, her voice sounding as glad and joyous as the notes of a bird.

And after the singing she talked with the marquis, and more than once she laughed aloud, his lordship's laugh mingling with hers.

Out in the corridor, Plumpton and Rigby listened to all these sounds, their souls in their eyes. Plumpton's face was wreathed in smiles.

"Hear this!" she whispered. "His lordship hasn't laughed so for years. He hasn't laughed since Master Geoffrey went, except in them sarcastic barks of his'n! Do hear him! Bless that child. She does carry the sunshine with her!"

"She's a perfidious creature," muttered Rigby. "She's been speaking up for Mr. Geoffrey. I heard her,

and little good she got by it. My lord was so ragious that I cleared out entirely. He looked worse than he did the time he flung the boot-jack at my head and nearly finished me! Lord Adlowe ought to know of her doings!"

The housekeeper paid little attention to these mutterings, bestowing all her attention upon the sounds that were so delightful to her.

From the moment in which her future seemed to open up so brightly before her, Giralda cast aside all her regrets at having left her home, for, despite her sense of duty, many had assailed her. She was convinced now that she had done right, and she longed to take Lord Trevalyan into the presence of her parents, and introduce him as her kind benefactor.

Saturday was passed pleasantly enough, though the day seemed long to the impatient little maiden, Lord Trevalyan driving her about the park in the phaeton. His foot seemed to recover miraculously fast, and his face beamed with a pleasantness long foreign to it.

On Sunday, Lord Trevalyan and Giralda drove to the village church, and took their places in the tall family pew. All the villagers had heard of the young stranger at the park, and more than one of those who had loved and believed in Geoffrey Trevalyan noticed how like Giralda's violet eyes were to his, and how strangely her delicate, patrician features resembled the lineaments of the Trevalyan family.

The marquess heard more than one of these whispered comments, and his pride was gratified that the girl he had chosen to take as the pet of his old age should be deemed a scion of his haughty house.

"She does look like a Trevalyan," he thought, bestowing a side glance upon her—"strangely like! She carries herself like a dainty little princess! What a generous, loving heart she has! After all, I am not to have such a desolate old age."

He escorted her from the church to the carriage, with a fondness and pride he did not care to conceal.

"Your position at Trevalyan Park, and in my esteem, has been made plain to these good villagers to day, Giralda," he said, with a smile, as they drove homeward over the mountainous road in the lumbering old chariot. "You have seen their opinion of the new state of my affairs in their joyous looks and smiles. You shall know that of Adlowe to-morrow."

He smiled, after his old sardonic fashion, at the thought of what his nephew would say to his romantic project of adopting a granddaughter.

Giralda looked up rather apprehensively, but he dissipated her fears with a genial and encouraging regard.

"You need have no fears, my child," he observed. "The people around here will tell you that I have an iron will. Adlowe might as well beat himself against a rock as to assail my decisions. I am impatient to see him. I see by your face that you are not. Think, then, of your mother. You may see her to-morrow night at the theatre, for I shall take you to one. And after the play is over she will take us to your home and to your father."

This assurance made Giralda as happy as even her eccentric friend could wish.

All that day she beamed with smiles. The next morning, however, a cloud seemed to have settled upon her spirit like a foreboding of evil.

The two started for London by the early train, attended by the valet and a little maid who had been procured from the village to attend upon Giralda.

Before noon the party was comfortably settled in its new quarters.

After luncheon, Lord Trevalyan ordered a supply of morning papers to be brought to their little sitting-room, and he read to Giralda the various theatre announcements.

"You do not recognise any name among all these?" inquired the marquess, after reading the names of all the actresses of reputation. "Not one sounds familiar?"

"Not one," answered Giralda, with a sigh of disappointment. "I never heard of but one of the theatres before, and that one was of the Haymarket. I heard mamma mention that, and I remembered it, as it is a very odd name for a theatre."

"That is a clue, at least," said Lord Trevalyan. "We'll go to the Haymarket."

At this juncture a knock was heard on the door, and a waiter entered, bearing a note on a salver. Having delivered it, he withdrew.

"It is a reply, I suppose, from Adlowe," said the marquess. "I dropped him a line, informing him of our arrival, and requesting him to call. Ah!"

His lordship had torn open and perused the note while speaking. He now said, with animation:

"What a singular coincidence! Adlowe writes that he cannot find time to call this afternoon, having

engagements, and that he would come this evening, only that he has engaged to escort the Lady Beatrice Hampton to the Haymarket. How singular! I engaged a theatre-box at the hotel-office. It happens, as the clerk said, to be exactly opposite the Hampton box! Well, my little Giralda, you are fortunate in the very commencement of your sight-seeing. You will behold to-night the most gloriously grandly beautiful woman in London—a lady without heart, a magnificent marble statue! It will be an event worthy your remembrance!"

(To be continued.)

## OWEN McDERMOTT.

I WAS not a professional at that time. In fact, I had never acted in an independent capacity, and was not sure that I should succeed in the peculiar calling. I was only two-and-twenty, and had been for nearly two years Captain William Kipp's "confidential man." All who remembered "Old Kipp,"—his chin ever hidden beneath a heavy silken bandanna, and his upper lip brown with snuff—will remember that when he got upon the track of a rogue, said rogue was sure to be caught. I completed my twenty-second year on the fifth of July, and on the first of the following month Kipp laid aside his heavily folded bandanna, bought an extra-sized silver snuff-box, and retired from business, remarking to me:

"Bob,"—my name is Robert Rogers—"when you want a friend, come to me."

I thanked him, but did not know whether I should ever tax his kindness or not. Accident however, very soon decided the matter for me.

Within a week after my old employer's retirement, as I came in to dinner one day, I found a letter on my plate. It was from one of the wealthiest merchants in the city, a Mr. Elias Whittemore, requesting me to call on him in the afternoon.

I waited on Mr. Whittemore at the appointed time, and upon being ushered into his presence, he informed me that he had sent to Captain Kipp on professional business, but he had returned him an answer that he had retired, and strongly recommended me as a person in whom every confidence might be placed. Mr. Whittemore then proceeded to acquaint me with his business.

"Mr. Rogers," said he, "you can imagine that something is wrong. In a word, I am being robbed!—gradually and systematically robbed! It has been going on now, to my certain knowledge, for about three months; and during that time I know that I have lost seven thousand pounds. I made the first discovery by accident. One afternoon, about three months since, a young friend of mine came into my office and asked if I would let him place ten thousand pounds in my strong box for safe-keeping while he went into the country a few days. I gave him permission with pleasure. We counted the money, and I found just ten thousand. I simply pinned a band around it, upon which was the depositor's name, with the words, 'On deposit for a few days.'"

"In the course of a week my friend came for his money, and I happened to be alone in the office. I took the package from the safe; and, as is my custom, ran it over. I counted it once—twice—thrice—then turned it and counted it upon the back, and only nine thousand pounds. 'Careless!' I exclaimed. I'll venture to say Preston has never looked to see where this money came from, but has taken out a thousand pounds upon the stupid supposition that it was mine. I said this; and yet I knew, all the while, that Preston was one of the most careful and methodical men in the world. This Preston—Francis Preston—is my confidential clerk and private bookkeeper, sir. However, I put in the missing thousand, and sent my friend away feeling very grateful."

Mr. Whittemore now asked me to look at his safe, which I did. First was a triple iron door, the centre plate of which was warranted to be utterly impervious to drilling, and the whole armed with a first-class powder-proof lock. Inside of this, set solidly in its bed of masonry, was a very large iron vault, or safe, the door of which was made as secure as human ingenuity had been able to accomplish. This vault opened, and we came to yet another safe—*one of the very best in the world*—which, of itself, was warranted by its makers as capable of withstanding any amount of fire or of burglarious manipulation.

"What do you think of it?" said Whittemore, after I had examined the strong-box to my satisfaction.

"I think," I replied, "that, without the true keys or faithful duplicates, no human power could reach the heart of this vault through its closed and carefully locked doors—not in one night, at least."

"Just my opinion," he rejoined; "and yet that very safe is robbed continually. We have two sets of keys. I used to let Preston keep one set; but lately I have kept them both myself. I not only carry them home with me, but I sleep with them under my pillow. And yet, Mr. Rogers—by night—while I am away with the keys, after having locked the safe myself—money is stolen from that iron chamber!"

"And you wish me to find out who does it?" said I.

"Yes, sir," he answered.

I then asked him whom he suspected. He hesitated. I told him that that was to be a work of mutual confidence. If he could not trust me with his suspicions—suspicions which had had three months for growth—I should prefer to stop where I was. He smiled, and said:

"I have spoken of Preston. His salary is good, and I have lately raised it. He has a wife who, I fear, is rather too fond of fashion; and he has also two daughters who have recently become old enough to appear in society—and I understand that they have made quite a sensation. You know how such things draw upon one's purse. And, moreover—it seems hard to speak of it, but I cannot get around it—for two years past Preston has had his wife's invalid brother on his hands to entirely provide for. Taking all these things together I am led to the conclusion that the book-keeper's salary could not meet such heavy expenses. And there is one thing more: Since the discovery of the theft by myself Preston has been a different man from his former self. Before, he was cheerful in his greetings, smiled when he met me, never hesitated to ask my advice upon any matter of business—while now he avoids me, hangs his head when we meet, and never meets save when absolute necessity compels him."

The merchant then arose and took a fifty pound note from the safe, and handed the money to me.

"Simply on account of expenses," he said.

And I took it as promptly as he had offered it.

"Mr. Rogers, you are the son of one of my oldest and best friends. Do you understand?"

I told him, "Perfectly."

"Mr. Preston is away this afternoon, but you will see him here to-morrow."

I observed a young man drawing a glass of water at the ice-fountain. I had seen the individual before, and as I turned and shook hands with my employer, I whispered "Who is that drawing ice-water?"

"Oh,—one of my porters,—and one of the best men in the office. Why?"

"I only asked because I thought I had seen him before—a friendly recognition—that's all."

And with this I went out, carrying with me the form and features of the young porter—and I carried them as distinctly as though I had had his very face before me. I had no other thought than to locate him; and at length I did it. I had seen him on the stage of a concert saloon, where he had played sprightly Irish characters, and sang songs. His name had been down on the bills as Owen McDermott, and I rather thought that might be his true cognomen. However, that I had located the scene of his first introduction to my notice I was simply certain; and the source of puzzle was, why a young man (not over twenty-four) of such temperamental, bound by no social ties to sedate life, possessing such a fund of wit and humour, so capably adapted to light *vaudeville* and comedy, and evidently able to find engagement upon respectable boards, if he chose, should let himself to a merchant to perform the duties of porter. And I think any man of reflection, in my place at the time, would have marvelled as I did.

On the next day I went down and saw Francis Preston. I found him to be a man of about forty years, slightly built, light brown wavy hair, mild, passive blue eyes, a face of calm, tranquil beauty—every feature stamped with truth and honour. He was bowed down—was under a cloud—a grievous burden was upon him—and his agony was such that I could lay hold upon it and feel it. Mr. Whittemore introduced me to him as a son of one of his old friends, and then went out on pretext of business, offering me his seat, and thus I had an opportunity for conversation with the suspected book-keeper.

Never mind what we talked about—only suffice it for me to say that I could not draw him out until I spoke of my orphanage and my utter loneliness in



the world, at which his eye moistened, and his tongue loosened.

As I left the office on that day I said to myself—"I shall take another tack. Francis Preston is not a thief. He could not rob his employer." And then I prayed heaven, if such a moral anomaly were possible, that I might never know it!

There were two places now to which I resolved to turn my attention for a season, leaving Preston alone—the office, and the residence of Owen McDermott—for I had found that to be his true name. I procured a sufficient disguise, and on the very first evening of my watch I was rewarded by a discovery. McDermott boarded, and the situation of the house was such that I had no difficulty in keeping a safe watch.

On the evening in question, at about eight o'clock, McDermott came out dressed in the very height of style and fashion, and sauntered off. He stepped in at the Grapes and drank something, and then leisurely crossed the park to the hotel, where he stopped upon the upper corner, under the variegated light of a druggist's brilliant window. But he was not to remain there a great while. Ere long a female came up, took the young man's arm, and together they walked off. There was a vacant look about her even when others were excited which betrayed a lack of sensibility; and it was moreover plain to be seen that she was not brilliant. And yet she was really pretty and interesting; and that she loved Owen McDermott was as clear as the deep flush upon her full cheeks. Luckily for her she had dimples in those cheeks, and one in her chin; and when she laughed, which was very often, the playful lines leapt and shot about the eyes in a manner which added immeasurably to the beauty of the smile. Her dress was not showy, but it was costly; and her jewellery was of the pure water.

I followed them to a small hotel, where I left them. Three days after this I sat in the office, towards the latter part of the afternoon, engaged in conversation with Preston; and we were talking of Owen McDermott. I had asked him how he came to the office.

"He came about four months ago," said the confidential clerk. "He asked first for a clerk's, or bookkeeper's, berth; then as a salesman's; and when I had informed him that there was no opening of the kind he remarked that his wish was to get into a good, well-conducted, wholesale establishment of this kind, and work his way up. He had a fair education, and understood all the bookkeeping that could be learned at school; but he knew nothing of business. He had a little money, and if we would hire him he would serve as porter for six months or a year; after which he should rise or go out, as he had evinced merit. I presented his case to Mr. Whittemore, and he was engaged, and a most punctual and attentive man has he proved himself."

Preston went on with quite an addition to his encomium, after which I think he used a "but," and spoke of there being something in the young porter's manner that had puzzled him; but I did not hear—or, I did not mark his words—for, while he spoke, a female entered the office, who at once engrossed my attention. It was the female whom I had seen with McDermott. There was no mistake—not a particle. That face was not to be confounded with any other face. She entered the office and stopped at the station of the first disengaged salesman, with whom she shook hands, and very smilingly passed social salutations. And so on with half a dozen more. Near the counting-house, and within two yards of where I sat, she met Owen McDermott, but did not recognise him—did not even notice that a man was near her. And so on his part—not so much as a glance of interest, or the least betrayal of a token of recognition.

In the name of all that was wonderful! Could my eyes play me such a trick? Were there twins, and this one of them?

"Mr. Preston, who is that young lady?"

"Which?"

"I see but one."

He looked at me with a comical expression, and I saw in an instant that he thought I was quizzing him.

"My eyesight is defective at short distances," I explained. "She looks familiar; but her face is all a blur to me."

"Oh—ah—why,—that is Miss Ellen."

"Nellie?" said I.

"I never heard her father call her so."

"Never did?"

"No. But then he may be very different at home from what he is here in his office."

What a bolt was that to let fall upon a man's head! Mr. Whittemore's daughter! A very large "nice" appeared to my perception. I arose from my chair and went out into the office just in time to see Miss Ellen going down into the basement. There was another way of descent, and I went down by it, and succeeded in finding a secure hiding-place without being observed by the young lady. By-and-bye, Owen McDermott came down whistling "The Bould Soldier Boy." He discovered the lady, and was silent. There was a careful survey by McDermott, and a careful survey by Miss Whittemore; after which they came together in a dark corner, where they conversed for two or three minutes.

I need not go into details. I had a certain work to do, and I will simply tell what bears thereupon. These were detached sentences which I plainly heard.

"Oh, yes. I put the drops in his wine when I turned it out. He lets me do anything for him I want to do. How they do make him sleep, to be sure!"

"And yet, Nellie, they can't hurt him any more than so much pure water. These drops you will give him to-night. You can put them in his glass before the wine is poured out."

"I'll do it,—never fear."

"And if we are successful to-night to-morrow we will be off."

"Oh, my own dear Owen, you'll never, never, never cease to love me!"

"How can I? Are you not all in all to me?"

"Aye—and think what I've done: With my own hands robbed my father of some thousands of pounds!"

"And to-night, darling, we'll make it enough to be happy on while we live. Your father will be sound asleep before midnight. You can then take the keys from beneath his pillow; put on your disguise, and join me. I shall be in the old arch."

The rest of their conversation consisted mostly of questions by Ellen touching their future course, and answers from McDermott which I could very plainly, and with absolute certainty, see were the empty promises and alluring devices of the easy-going, utterly selfish, and morally obnoxious votary of gilded vice.

That night I went down to the office, to a side entrance of which I had duplicate keys, for the purpose of taking post of observation. I had just applied the key to the outer door, when a finger was laid upon my shoulder, and I looked around.

"Ah—Simmons!"

"Eh?—Bob!—Is it you?"

"Yes—and I'm glad you're here. Is this your beat?"

"Yes."

"Then, on the hush, I've got a job here, and the birds are in hand. Don't interfere with anyone who may enter after me."

"D'ye want help?"

"No. They are the last pair in the world Whittemore has thought of suspecting, and will fall into my hands in the morning easily enough."

"All right. Good luck to you."

"Thank you." And with this I entered, locking the doors behind me.

My first work, after having gained the office, was to fix a safe hiding-place, from which I could watch all that transpired in the counting-house, which I did by a simple arrangement of goods upon a counter near at hand.

At about half-past twelve they came—McDermott and Miss Ellen—entering by the front door. At first I was a little staggered, for the porter seemingly had a boy with him; but I quickly discovered that a boy's garb was the "disguise" of which I had heard them speak. They wasted no time. First they closed the outer door behind them; then lighted a lamp; then entered the counting-house; and then, with the true keys thereto, opened the triple safe. While I was on the watch the merchant left all the money that came in after banking hours in his vault, and on the present occasion it chanced to be considerable, as McDermott had been aware.

"We shall be off before any search can be made," I heard the porter say; "so there can be no danger in making a big lift this time. And then, if there is search, it will be at Preston's. There's over five thousand here,—let's take three of it. It's yours, and you'll be my wife before this time in another day."

"Well," said Ellen, "take what you please."

"No," persisted Owen, "it is your money—do you take it."

And the poor, simple-minded, infatuated girl took out three thousand pounds, in gold and bank-notes, and passed it over to her companion. Then the safe was relocked, the light extinguished, and the twain departed by the way they had found entrance.

I saw them take a cab, and then I went home.

Early in the morning I called upon a professional friend to bear me company. You know what a rat can do at bay—and I knew not what a high-spirited Hibernian, of McDermott's temperament, might offer to do upon finding himself in such a trap as I was ready to spring upon him. Together we went to his residence, where I left Watkins (so my friend was named) under the front window, with an understanding of my signal for his presence. I found part of the lodgers up, but not all, and among the latter was McDermott.

The landlady asked me who she should say had called with the message; and I gave her the name of Mark Trull.

I concluded to have Watkins with me, so I called him, and let him in myself. In a short time Owen McDermott came down, and entered the parlour.

"Now then, my—! Eh! What me—!"

"It's all right, Mr. McDermott. You are wanted at the house of Mr. Whittemore."

"Oho! That's yer game, is it?" and he made a spring for the door; but the hands of Watkins were upon him like a pair of double-threaded vices.

"Easy, my friend," said I, with a smile. "I haven't taken all this trouble to be thwarted at this stage of the game. No, no." I arose, and snapped a pair of very bright, clean steel ruffles upon his wrists, and then informed him that he could go with us quietly, or he could cut up as much as he pleased. He broke down, and came near crying; but presently he rallied, and, with an oath, he exclaimed:

"Go ahead. The game's up, and I've lost. And the game is all I've lost. By—! I've done nothing for which the law can touch me! So go ahead, the sooner the better."

And beyond this I spoke not a dozen words with Owen McDermott. He gave himself up to my guidance, but kept his tongue still.

I took a cab for the three of us, and proceeded directly to the dwelling of Mr. Whittemore, and, sitting by McDermott's side, I told to Mr. Whittemore everything I had seen, heard, and done in connection with the robbery of his treasure; and in the end I turned to my prisoner:

"Owen McDermott, have I told the truth?"

And he answered, without a moment's hesitation,

"Yes."

And then Mr. Whittemore arose, and asked me if I would leave the prisoner with him, and give him the key of the handcuffs; and when I had told him, Yes, he said:

"Call upon me, at my office, at half-past four, this afternoon. Till then, excuse me." At the appointed time I was at the merchant's office, and I found him looking ten years older than he had looked that morning. He was broken beneath a heavy weight, and his words were few.

"Mr. Rogers," he said, "may I depend upon the good faith of the officer who was with you this morning?"

I assured him upon that point, and he proceeded:

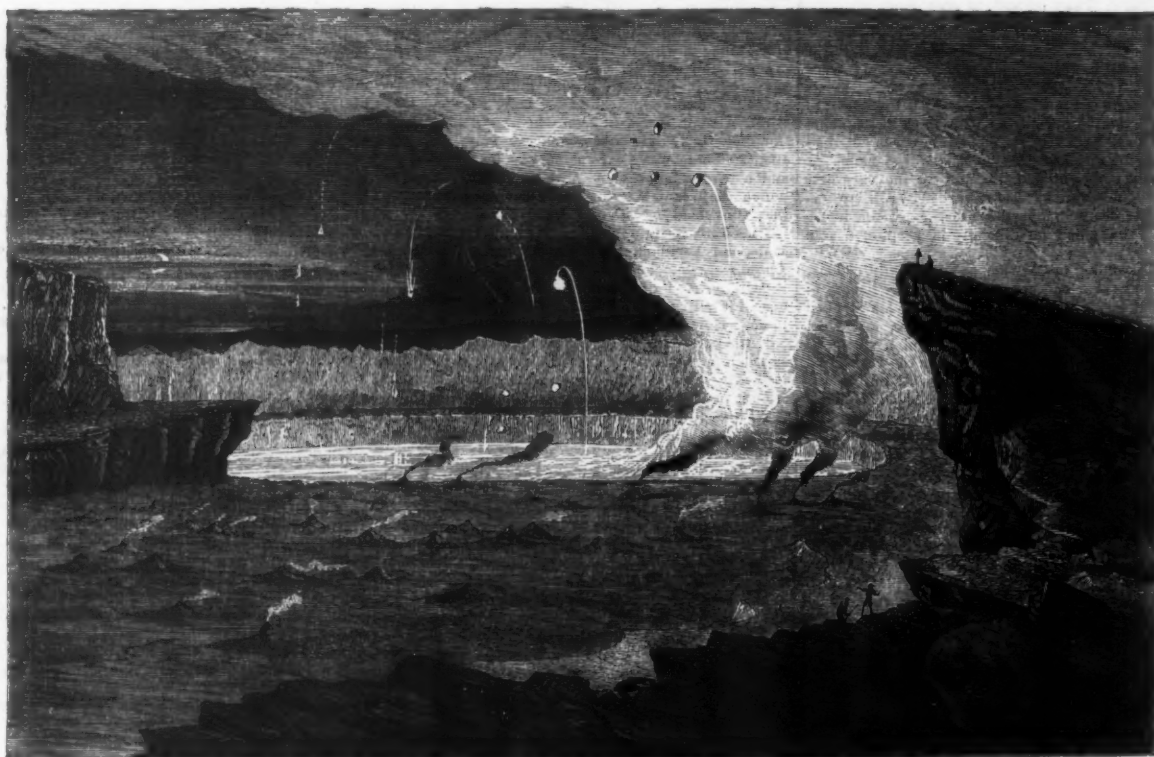
"It is all settled. I made McDermott confess to my child that he should have ere long deserted her if she had gone away with him, and that it was the money, and not her, that he sought. He met her first at a fancy bazaar. He learned who she was, and having discovered her lack of mental strength, he applied himself to the work of bonding her to his own purposes—with what result we have seen. He has left the city, and I have his word that he will not return for three years, and that he will never speak with my daughter again. However, I do not think Ellen would listen to him more. As for my poor child—I can only hope."

"And now, sir, I can only add, that I am deeply grateful for what you have done, as well as for the very quiet manner in which you have done it; and I trust this will sufficiently recompense you. If not, come to me, and I will make it more. Mr. Preston can never sufficiently thank you, because I shall never let him know what a load of suspicion against him you removed from my mind. But I may inform you that I have almost doubled his salary, and he has gone home, I think, the happiest and most grateful man I ever saw."

I did not open the envelope which Mr. Whittemore had given me until I reached home. I found one thousand pounds in it. At first I feared he had made a mistake. A thousand pounds for catching a thief? But I thought of his daughter saved, and concluded that all was right.

I did not go back for more pay; but from that time my fate was sealed as a detective; and I have had no reason to complain of the result.

S. C. J.



[A VOLCANIC WONDER: KILANEA PELE, SANDWICH ISLANDS.]

## VOLCANIC WONDERS.

## KILANEA PELE, ISLAND OF HAWAII.

HAWAII, the most easterly and largest of the Sandwich Islands, is particularly elevated on its west coasts. Its most especial wonder is the volcanic mountain of Mauna Loa which is situated at rather more than forty miles from the Mission Station of Napolo, in the district of Kealahou. Although nearly three miles in height it deceives the eye as to its vast magnitude by the gradually-rounded dome shape of its summit, which, half way down, measures sixty feet in diameter.

At an elevation of somewhat more than two thousand one hundred and eighty-four feet is a vast plain, some twenty miles in width, from which rises the dome of Mauna Loa.

In this plain is the wonderful crater of Kilanea, of the vast dimensions of which some idea may be formed by the fact that it is three and a half miles long, two and a half wide, and over a thousand feet deep. At a depth of 660 feet from the upper edge, a black ledge of lava surrounds it on every side, varying in width from 600 to 2,000 feet, which is constantly undergoing some change, as is formed by the continuous rising of the molten lava in the great lakes which after it subsides, leaves this deposit; from the black ledge to the bottom of the crater is 384 feet.

This great lake, or lake of fire, is the marvel of the volcano. It is situated at the southern extremity of the crater, and is fifteen hundred feet long by one thousand feet wide. The whole of this space was filled (as described by a late visitor) with liquid fire in a constant state of slow ebullition, while every now and then huge masses of red hot matter or rocks, many tons in weight, were ejected to the height of from seventy to eighty feet, falling back into the molten mass with a dull and heavy sound.

The bottom of the large crater, which is seen in the middle distance of the view, is covered with innumerable cones, varying in height from 30 to 50 feet, some showing no signs of action, while others puff out fumes of sulphurous smoke or emit slight jets of flame. Occasionally, the surface of the distant lake of fire rises, overflows its brim and long streams of liquid lava flow over this, the great crater, and look like enormous serpents winding their way among the cones.

The light from this great reservoir of fire was sufficient to enable one to read the smallest print, although at a distance of five hundred feet above it, and the vapour and steam that were constantly escaping were so rarified as not to impede the view, but, spreading out overhead, only became visible in

a bright and beautiful cloud, which, illuminated from the lake below, seemed to sink and rise alternately.

To look upon all this, to reflect upon the situation on which you stand, with the vast immeasurable fires that roll beneath, encompassed by huge basaltic walls, emitting clouds of sulphurous fumes, while enormous rocks are hurled into the air, threatening you every moment with destruction—this requires strength of nerve, and draws the mind to reflect on what must be the state of the interior of our world when such a vent as this is required. All notions or usual ideas of volcanic craters are dissipated on seeing this, and those few who can visit this remote portion of the globe will do well to visit Mauna Loa.

**GREAT STORM AT BRUGES.**—A frightful storm broke, a few days ago, over Bruges and its environs. The claps of thunder were terrific, and rain, mixed with hail, fell in torrents. The standing crops and the fruit trees are seriously damaged. The church of Saint Andre was reduced to ashes. Most of the ornaments were saved, but the altar—a *chef d'œuvre* of the 14th century—and the organ, renowned throughout the neighbourhood, were utterly destroyed.

**RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN AUSTRIA.**—Austria possesses at present 263 nunneries and 4,390 nuns. They are thus distributed:—Tyrol has 103, Bohemia 53; Austria proper, 47; Moravia, 19; Salzburg, 17; Styria, 17; and Carinthia, 8. Besides these there are 287 convents in the empire with 5,348 monks, 3,441 of whom are priests, and 1,877 lay brothers. They are thus divided: Bohemia has 78; Tyrol, 66; Austria proper, 66; Moravia, 34; Styria, 28; Salzburg, 9; and Carinthia, 6. Thus 10,208 persons in Austria have devoted themselves to a religious life.

**SAD FATE OF A COUNTESS IN ITALY.**—A terrible tragedy is reported by a correspondent at Rome. A Neapolitan countess, the widow of a well-known partisan of Mazzini, who was assassinated some few years back by his associates, has been murdered in a railway carriage. She left Naples for Rome on the 5th of August, accompanied by two persons who appeared to be Piedmontese officers. The three got into a *coupé* together, but when the police visited the carriage at Isoletta the officers had disappeared, and the dead body of the countess lay on the floor of the carriage with a bullet through her brain. Her purse and jewellery were untouched, and the crime is attributed to a political motive. Notwithstanding the utmost exertions of the police, no trace of the murderers has yet been found.

**DISCOVERY OF A PAINTING AT POMPEII.**—An important discovery has been made at Pompeii—namely, that of a painting, found in a chamber adjoining the one which was opened at the time of the Princess Margherita's excursion. The picture represents the circus such as it existed not long before the eruption, and is the first of this kind which has been brought to light, as the Romans ordinarily selected my theological, rural, or purely ideal subjects. The representation shows that the amphitheatre was planted with trees. The execution is not above mediocrity. Near the circus is to be seen a large edifice, of which hitherto not the slightest indication existed. Commander Fiorelli is said to have the intention of immediately searching for this building, so as to complete the knowledge already possessed of the buried city. The painting has been detached from the wall on which it was executed, and will be removed to the museum at Naples, in order to be protected from the action of the atmosphere.

**THE STUD OF THE SULTAN OF ZANZIBAR.**—There is a standing order at Zanzibar, given by the Sultan to the "groom of the stole," that all English naval officers be supplied with saddle horses at wish. On first going to the "Royal Stables" I was much surprised at the state of affairs; there were about fifty Arab steeds, some under a shed, standing on the roughest of stones. The whole place was anything but wholesome or clean. Other horses were tethered to rings, standing exposed to the sun, their legs being weakened thereby—in fact, spoilt. An Arab, gorgeously dressed, is supposed to look after them, but he only seemed to look at them all day; there he sat, doubtless admiring his favourite beast, content to see them follow his own race to degeneration. I was much disappointed, for instead of the Arab steeds of my imagination, this Royal stud of an Arab Sultan consisted of about fifty horses, out of which not more than three would have been fit for Rotten Row. Most of the others were scarcely fit for harness; and, after taking many rides, we found they were really worse than they looked—generally very weak in the knees, and addicted to stumbling. It must not be imagined that our cavalcade on setting out was mounted on noble, fiery steeds, ornamented with rich trappings; many of us had pieces of string for bridles, one minus stirrups, the others minus other things, and all seedily arrayed. I do not wish to detract from the kindness of the Sultan, for he provided his best; it is, however, a thousand pities to see such a good breed spoilt. The Sultan rarely uses his horses—the exercise is too great. A few years ago the Arabs were as fond of riding as Englishmen are of cricket.





[THE BRAVO RECOGNISED.]

## THE BIRTH MARK.

## CHAPTER VI.

"THERE is another claimant," the lawyer said, though without his usual harshness.

He noticed that his remark drew the rosy bloom from the fair cheeks of the lovely stranger, and that a shade of sadness fell upon her face.

She remained silent a moment, and then continued, in the same sweet voice:

"Mr. Raymond, if I were not sure that I am the lost Countess Perdita, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella D'Ossiri, I would not ask your aid. If this other claimant be really the true lost countess, I shall rejoice in the happiness of the father and mother."

"Why have you applied to me?" interrupted Mr. Raymond.

"You were in Spain when the child was stolen by Inez de Parma. You were a witness of the act—"

"Stay! you are saying too much!" exclaimed Mr. Raymond.

"No."

"I say yes! Be silent on that point, if you require my aid in this matter. What I saw in Spain I may hereafter tell. Upon what do you base your claims?"

His words were framed harshly, and his sentences were abrupt. This arose from habit; but his voice was modulated to a generous frankness unknown to his lips for many a year.

"First, upon my extraordinary resemblance to the duchess."

"The resemblance is extraordinary, but by itself is worthless as evidence in a court of law."

"Next, upon the possession of the garments worn by the infant when stolen. Garments which will be recognized by the duchess."

"Why should they be recognised by the duchess?"

"The duchess embroidered them herself. She dressed the infant a few hours before it was stolen. I possess those garments, and the finger-rings worn by the infant."

"You will have to prove how they became yours."

"Listen: The infant Countess Perdita slept in an apartment adjoining that of the duchess, and in the care of a nurse who called herself Maria La Forge. That nurse was Inez de Parma. At midnight Inez stole from the palace, bearing the infant in a mantle. She had already twice left the palace, carrying each time a heavy casket of jewels. In the street, at the private entrance of the palace, the wind tore the veil

from the face of the child. The light of a lamp fell upon her features, and she was seen—by whom?"

"By James Raymond," replied the lawyer, more and more amazed. "It does not matter if I admit that."

"You did not recognise her," returned the lady; "but your suspicions were aroused, and you followed the carriage in which she fled until it halted before the private entrance of the residence of Inez, Countess de Parma!"

"Ah, then some one must have followed me!" cried the lawyer.

"Yes—Pedro Diaz."

"Pedro Diaz! Then you are the one whom he is to produce as the lost countess?"

"What? Is he in this city—that dreadful ruffian?" exclaimed the lady, in genuine terror.

"You fear him, lady?"

"I tremble at his name!"

"You need not tremble here, lady. For he will be in prison to-morrow."

"Ah—thank heaven for that!" said the lady, regaining her composure. "You do not know that he has threatened to take my life. But let me continue my story of the abduction:

"You saw the nurse enter the mansion of Inez de Parma with the child; and you saw a man in a cloak glide into the house immediately after? You spoke to this man, and he recognised you; but he made no reply. Am I right?"

"You are. The man wore a cloak, and seemed to have something in his arms," replied the lawyer.

"He had an infant," said the lady.

"Ah! Then two infants were carried into the mansion of the Countess de Parma?"

"Yes—two female infants. One was Perdita D'Ossiri, borne in the arms of Inez de Parma. The other was—I have never been told who—carried by the man in the cloak. This man had followed the carriage of the Countess de Parma, to which you clung, from the D'Ossiri Palace, and bore in his arms that unknown infant. This unknown infant was clothed exactly as the duchess had clothed her child—the embroidery of the dress so similar that the difference was barely recognisable. The resemblance of infant to infant was remarkable."

"Inez de Parma, after entering her mansion, threw aside her disguise as nurse. While doing so she left the sleeping Perdita in an ante-chamber, in the charge of a woman named Rosa Baetta. Remember the name of that woman—Rosa Baetta!"

The lawyer nodded, and wrote the name in his note-book. There was an air of truth about this handsome young lady which impressed him profoundly.

"Rosa Baetta and the man in the cloak were lovers."

"But this man in the cloak," interrupted the lawyer. "What was his name?"

"Pedro Diaz."

"Ah, now I begin to see."

"For a long time," continued the lovely stranger, "Pedro Diaz had learned the purpose of the Countess de Parma. He was informed by Rosa Baetta, his spy, his lover. Rosa hated the countess, whose maid she was, because she knew that the countess had once loved Pedro, had been beloved by him, had been his wife. Infatuated with a passion for Pedro, Rosa served him in everything. Had Pedro bid her to stab the countess, Rosa would have done it gladly."

"Therefore Pedro Diaz knew he could depend upon Rosa in the execution of the plot he had conceived. He detested the Countess de Parma. He hated the Duke D'Ossiri. Besides he wished to secure two large sums of money."

"Will you explain the last," said the attentive lawyer, who, though hitherto convinced that Carola was the lost countess, felt that Pedro Diaz was capable of counter-plot against Inez de Parma.

"He expected by gaining possession of the stolen infant countess he could at some future time win a great reward from the duke and duchess. He supposed that Inez de Parma would destroy the child. Therefore, as he was to receive a large sum for destroying a child, an infant girl, he resolved to exchange infants secretly, and thus, while earning his unholy reward, cast the crime upon his former wife."

"But the other child? Whose child was she?" demanded the lawyer.

"I do not know. If I knew I could not reveal it without the consent of another."

"And that other?"

"Is Rosa Baetta."

"Where is she?"

"In this city. You wonder why we are in London. Be patient."

The lawyer arose and lighted the lamps. The hour was after sunset, and the situation of the private office made it very obscure at that time.

"Then you do not know who that infant was?" he said, as a sign that she should go on with the narrative.

"I am not at liberty to state what I suspect," she replied. "The infants were exchanged. Pedro Diaz hastened away with the infant countess, and when Inez de Parma returned to the ante-room Rosa Baetta said:

"My lady, this is a beautiful child."

"I care nothing for its beauty," replied the countess.

ness. "Come, we must reach the French frontier as soon as possible."

"She did not so much as glance at the infant, but hurried to her carriage, followed by Rosa Baetta, who carried the child."

"You, vigilantly watching, saw the countess and recognised her as she entered the carriage. Rosa Baetta also saw you, and recognised you, though she did not then inform her mistress. When she did the countess was in France, and cared nothing for the matter then."

"The affair had been planned for months. The countess had secretly sold all that remained of a once large property. Relays of fleet horses had been stationed all along the route of flight, so that long before the bereaved parents suspected that their treacherous nurse was Inez de Parma, the countess was in France."

"From France she sailed for England. Rosa Baetta rejoined Pedro Diaz, who was then in Italy with the infant Countess Ferdina—"

"Yourself?"

"Myself. At length Rosa and Pedro quarrelled, and she fled from him to Germany, taking me with her."

"Pedro Diaz pursued. Not because he loved Rosa, but to kill her and to regain possession of me."

"To relate how he pursued us, how we escaped, how often he traced us, how narrowly we evaded his pertinacious pursuit—a pursuit extending over all Europe, even into Asia, and embracing several years, would take hours."

"At length, by a stratagem, Rosa caused Pedro to believe that she and I had perished of the plague in Constantinople, and after that we were unmolested."

"Rosa Baetta, finding that I had talents, reared me for the Opera, and thus it was that I became famous as the Prima Donna Zaretta."

"Why did not Rosa restore you to the duke? She would have been well rewarded."

"She dreaded the anger of the duke. She dreaded the officers of justice in Madrid. She delayed until to delay became a habit, and so the time passed on until she saw you this morning."

"Saw me! Where?"

"Did you notice a woman of middle height who met you, passed you, turned and followed you, touched you upon the shoulder and asked if you were not James Raymond, and if you had never been in Spain?"

"I remember. She wore a veil, and I replied that I was James Raymond and that I had lived in Spain. I remember. So that woman was Rosa Baetta?"

"Yes, and then she resolved to procure your aid in restoring me to my parents, and in proving that I am the lost countess."

"Where is the Duke D'Ossiri?" asked the lawyer.

"In Spain, we suppose," she replied, frankly.

"You have not heard that he is elsewhere?"

"We do not know that he lives. He may be dead. My mother may be dead also," she said, in a sad tone, while her beautiful eyes filled with tears. "It is more than a year since Rosa has heard from Spain, and then she heard that the duke was in feeble health."

"When did Rosa Baetta inform you that you were the lost countess?"

"To-day. Soon after she met you."

"And you never suspected that you were of noble birth?"

"Never. I have always, till to-day, believed that Rosa Baetta was my mother. She has always been kind to me, and I love her. She is in feeble health, and I rejoice that I am able to support her, to give her everything."

"There was something so pure, so gentle, yet so resolute in the air of the beautiful stranger, that the lawyer was deeply moved. The story was plausible. While he mused, she said, smiling:

"Rosa Baetta is superstitious. I am not; yet to please her we are to visit the celebrated fortune-teller, Senora Goliara, to-night. Mother Rosa thinks the fortune-teller can tell her of my future destiny. We are to go there to-night at ten o'clock."

"To the duchess?" mentally exclaimed the startled lawyer. "She must not go there! Ah, if Alfred only loved this one instead of the other—that is if this is the lost countess. I am in doubt. Carola may be—this one may be. Certainly this one resembles the duchess. Yet Carola strongly resembles the duke. Now which is the lost countess? I know that Inez de Parma has reared Carola under the belief that she is the infant stolen by her from the duke's palace. Knowing that, I have schemed to make Alfred and Carola deeply in love with each other, biding my time to say to my son:

"You have married a countess; the daughter of a duke!"

"Then I would prove the truth of my words by forcing the duke and duchess to acknowledge their lost daughter. It is possible, however, that I have

nearly succeeded in leading my only son to fall madly in love with some low-born, base-born girl, picked from the streets of Madrid by that scoundrel Pedro Diaz to carry out his ferocious scheme of vengeance?"

James Raymond felt the perspiration exuding from his forehead as these thoughts arose in his mind.

"If this stranger is the lost countess, who is Carola, who so remarkably resembles the duke?" he mused. "If Carola is the lost countess, who is this stranger, who so remarkably resembles the duchess? It is these mysterious resemblances which puzzle me. But come! This stranger has produced no proof of what she has said. I am foolish—I am bewildered, because I cannot control my passion for the duchess, and this stranger is the perfect image of the duchess at the time when I fell at her feet only to be rejected."

He was silent for a moment, during which his thoughts came rapidly.

"Lady," he said, at length, "can you persuade Rosa Baetta to come hither as soon as possible, bringing with her those and all other proofs—the infant garments, the finger-ring, &c.?"

"To-morrow we will come—"

"To-night," he interrupted, firmly. "When I undertake a case I never delay. It is now eight, or very nearly. In half-an-hour bring Rosa Baetta and all the proofs of your story. Tell her that I have seen Pedro Diaz this day, twice, and that she must make haste. On no account visit the fortune-teller's, for Pedro Diaz haunts the place."

The stranger, whom we will call Zaretta, trembled as she listened to these words. The keen-eyed and observant lawyer noticed this.

"She may be an impostor, but if so, at least unconsciously. It is very plain that she fears Pedro Diaz. It is not she, therefore, whom he is to produce as the lost countess to-morrow, or he would have been seen by Rosa Baetta."

"I will return within half-an-hour, sir," said Zaretta, resuming her heavy veil and gliding from the office.

He accompanied her through the outer office, where the porter alone remained to close the doors. As she issued into the street, and was borne away in the carriage, the lawyer turned to the porter, who was a stout, ill-formed fellow enough, yet perfectly obedient to his employer.

"Denton, do you know where Dr. Harlin lives?"

"Dr. Harlin? Oh, that's him as keeps the private madhouse?"

"Yes."

"I know where he lives, sir—at his mad-house, of course, and a fine residence that same, only it is not myself that—"

"Silence. I wish you to deliver a note to him immediately. Have a cab at the door while I write the note."

The porter hurried away, while the lawyer turned to the desk of one of his clerks, upon which a lamp was burning, and wrote a few peremptory lines which were addressed to Dr. Harlin.

The active porter soon returned, saying that the cab was at the door.

"Get into it, and use all haste to place this note in the hands of Dr. Harlin. You need not return to-night, unless you fail to find the doctor. I will close the office."

"Very well, sir," replied the porter, hurrying away.

The locality of the lawyer's office was dimly lighted, that portion of the street being little inhabited except by day. A street lamp burned here and there, at long intervals, and as the lawyer peered from the front-office door he saw pass by at a rapid pace the cloaked form of Pedro Diaz.

The Portuguese seemed in haste, for he walked fast, gazing at times over his broad shoulders as he proceeded.

#### CHAPTER VII

JAMES RAYMOND, standing in the dark shadow of his office-door, was unseen by Pedro Diaz, though he saw the flash and gleam of the bravo's fierce eyes as he glanced over his shoulder.

"He fears that he is followed," thought the lawyer.

This was true. Pedro, who had recognised Mr. Flaybank a detective, that officer having been pointed out to him by a robber-friend, instinctively feared that the detective was in trace of the perpetrator of the late robbery at the house of James Raymond.

As the Portuguese was the perpetrator of that crime his guilt warned him to shun all acquaintance with officers of justice. He had succeeded in evading the pursuit of the officer by passing through the drinking saloon, had returned to his room unfollowed, and shown himself to Miss Parnail at the window, as related in our first chapter.

It was a few minutes after that event when a servant delivered to him the note written by Miss Parnail.

This note read as follows:

"PEDRO DIAZ: I have seen and recognised you. Of course you have also recognised me. I do not fear you, nor anything that you dare do. Your disclosures to Dr. Kampton prompt me to seek an interview. If you wish to bargain with me upon any subject of the past or the present visit me this night at ten o'clock. J. DE P."

The perusal of this note forced a harsh, triumphant laugh from the bearded lips of the burly Portuguese.

"She does not fear me, nor anything that I may do, she says," he growled, gazing at the note as if it heard him and understood him. "But we know better. She does, the cunning devil. She is rich and holds a high station in society. She knows that I can pull her down, make known who she is, and what she did in Spain. She shall pay me a high price. Come, I have seen the Duchess D'Ossiri to-day. That was lucky. I am to be paid twelve thousand pounds if I produce the lost countess. What if I tell Inez de Parma, and demand in hand as much, if not more, not to lead the duchess to her house, into the presence of Senorita Carola, and say:

"Behold! This is the lost countess."

"If she pays me or not, I intend to win the twelve thousand. Bah! If I dared to show my face in Madrid I think I could make more than this."

"But they want my head yonder in Spain; they want it yonder in Portugal, in Italy, in France, and in Germany; they wish to choke me to death. Only in England am I safe; but I am not safe here; confound that burglary. Had I waited a few weeks, say until to-morrow, I should not tremble because I see a famous detective in the street. But courage! He may not have come here to see me, or rather to trace the robbery."

"I will secure the twenty-five thousand pounds to-morrow, and then leave Europe. I think a man may live in Turkey—a man like Pedro Diaz—with twenty-five thousand pounds. It shall be done; I will visit Countess Inez at ten."

With this resolve he gazed again from the window. It was not so dark yet but that he could clearly discern the features of those passing in the streets. The sun had still a few minutes to clothe the earth with his parting beams, and, as he gazed out, a carriage containing two ladies, rolled past.

One of these ladies was of middle age, or perhaps fully forty; the other was about eighteen, elegant and beautiful. Their veils were fluttering above their bonnets, and the Portuguese saw their faces, even their eyes, plainly.

He uttered a hoarse growl of utter astonishment as his gaze was fixed upon these faces. The carriage was moving slowly, and he had ample time to study them closely.

They did not raise their eyes to his. True, they glanced here and there, as strangers do in a large city, and doubtless their glances swept over his face. But they did not look at him; they did not recognise him. Had they recognised him the elder lady would have shrieked, and perhaps the younger one also.

The elder lady was Rosa Baetta. The younger lady was Zaretta, she who claimed to be the lost countess.

The carriage was one of those so fashioned that the top may divide and the interior be fully exposed, and was open just as it reached a spot midway between the residence of Miss Parnail—that is the residence of the Countess Inez de Parma—and the house in which was Pedro Diaz. The elder lady said to the driver:

"Close the top of the carriage."

The vehicle was halted, for no footman was in attendance, and thus Rosa Baetta and Senorita Zaretta, who claimed to be the lost Countess Ferdina, were for a moment between two houses, in one of which was Pedro Diaz, in the other, Countess Inez de Parma, former wife of Pedro Diaz, abductor of the lost countess, mother of Dr. Kampton, who was the son of Pedro Diaz, and believer that Carola was the lost countess.

In the latter house was also Carola, perhaps the lost countess, perhaps the child of nobody, or of somebody usually called nobody. While in the parlour of that house was her lover, Alfred Raymond, who has not yet been introduced to the reader.

The carriage having been closed moved on, leaving Zaretta to that interview with the lawyer which we have already narrated. Thus it will be seen that while Zaretta conversed with James Raymond, Rosa Baetta awaited her return in the carriage before his office.

That some one was in the carriage as Zaretta entered it, the lawyer saw, but he did not suspect that it was Rosa Baetta.



After their carriage had passed the house in which the Portuguese resided, he snatched up his hat and cloak to follow it.

"I heard she was dead, and the girl also," he muttered, as he stepped into the street, "but as I live I believe I have just seen them both. I will follow that carriage."

The vehicle, as we know, pursued its course towards the office of James Raymond, and thither Pedro Diaz would have followed it, had he not suddenly met two gentlemen, face to face.

These gentlemen were both aged, white-haired, dark-featured, and the moment before they met the Portuguese, grave and silent.

But as they moved aside to allow him to pass, each, as if moved by a mutual impulse, exclaimed in Italian:

"It is Diaz, the assassin!"

"It is the prince and his secretary!" cried Pedro, wheeling and plunging into a dark alley.

His movements were so fleet that the aged gentlemen could not follow, and immediately lost sight of him.

Pedro ran through the alley to the next street, down which he hastened, towards a crowd collected around some puppet-show. He found his way through the crowd and then hurried on.

"They must have lost sight of me by this time," he thought. "What brought them to England? All who know me are in this city. Well, to-morrow will see me leaving it."

He paused to wipe his steaming face and forehead, and glanced over his shoulder. A great deal of his life had been passed in darting glances over his shoulders, and he was expert in divining whether he was followed.

"I have lost sight of the carriage," he muttered, as he moved on, undecided as to his course.

Another sharp glance over his shoulder. He did not like what he saw. He caught a pair of keen eyes peering at him. The eyes were those of a woman, whose head was turned away the instant after her glance met that of the Portuguese.

He moved on; walked fast and changed his course every minute. A quick glance over his shoulder showed him that the woman held him in sight.

"Oh! So I am dogged! Dogged by a woman!" he mused. "It is doubtless that accursed detective. You may follow, whoever you are, but I will shake you off very soon."

He entered a house boldly; passed through it, left it by the rear, left its startled inmates staring at each other in amazement. Entered another in another street. Passed through that as he had the other, throwing its peaceful inhabitants into consternation by his cool audacity. Wandered here and there, ever watching, until, as we have seen, his devious course bore him past the office of James Raymond.

"You are free as yet," muttered the lawyer, as the Portuguese vanished in the distance, "but to-morrow before daylight you will be arrested."

He turned from the door and paced to and fro in the front office, a strange feeling of uneasiness making him restless. This feeling was so oppressive that it annoyed him greatly.

He was about to do what he had never contemplated doing in all his life. He was about to perpetrate, deliberately, a heinous crime—a crime punishable at that day with death.

But this purpose was not that which weighed upon his senses. In his career as a noted lawyer he had seen so much of crime, had so much to do with criminals, that his sceptical nature regarded crime as something natural and inherent with human principle. With him all mortality was fear of the law or the habit of education; crime was defiance of the law or the habit of ignorance and audacity.

His present oppressive uneasiness of mind and body arose from a mysterious presentiment of near and rapidly approaching peril of his life.

The very shadows upon the walls, cast there by the solitary lamp as its sickly rays fell faintly upon vacant desks and tall stools, seemed to assume shapes of warning. He was not superstitious, yet he shuddered with a chilly, strange sense of terror.

As time passed on he became impatient, and vented his feelings in incoherent sentences:

"Why does the man not come? What is this fear? It is certainly colder than it was. Will she come, and if she does will she bring the proofs? Dr. Kampton loves Carola! Why do I think of him now? That shadow on the wall strangely resembles the figure of a man—a man striking something with—yes, a hatchet. What does the shadow below the hatchet resemble? As I live, it looks much like another man sitting down. I wish Harlin would come. I suppose Alfred has acted upon my note, and that he and Carola are already at my house. Pedro Diaz, you will not rob that house again."

Cold and shivering, while sweat bathed his face and brow, he passed his handkerchief over them and tossed it upon a desk near him.

The shadow of the handkerchief loomed up large and distinct in outline as it fell upon the wall.

His restless eye, glancing here and there as he paced the office, soon fell upon this shadow. He paused and regarded it with surprise.

"It is a perfect profile of a human face," he muttered. "The face of a man, moustached, a tuft upon the chin, straight, high forehead, aquiline nose—a handsome profile, and seems quite familiar, too. Why, it is the profile of that daring rascal, Kampton."

He snatched up the handkerchief, saying, in a bitter tone:

"Any shape but that! For I despise that man. He dared to make a jest of me in open court. Ah, some one comes. It is Harlin."

He advanced to meet a man who had entered with a hasty step, a man clad in black, wearing gold spectacles, and a professional air, though his harsh, cruel and sinister features smacked rather of house-breaking than of the noble art of medicine.

This man hastened towards the lawyer rapidly, and when very near to him asked in an apprehensive whisper:

"Are we alone? Good. Has anything turned up to endanger my defence? Any new witness? Curse 'em! I thought I had got them all out of the way."

"Come into my private office," replied the lawyer. "Your defence is impregnable as I have planned it, Dr. Harlin. It is not for that I wish to see you."

The doctor drew a long breath of relief. His scoundrelism had involved him in prosecution which menaced him with the halter, and his guilty fears had led him to imagine that his lawyer had discovered some vital flaw in his intended defence.

"Do you leave your front office open?" asked the doctor, as he followed the lawyer into the private office.

"What is there in a lawyer's office worth stealing?" replied Mr. Raymond, in a sardonic tone. "My safe is in this office, not out there. Besides, I expect clients to-night, and it would not do to drive them away with closed doors."

They were soon engaged in earnest conversation, and at its conclusion the doctor returned to the front office. There he seated himself at a desk, as if he were a clerk, and busied himself in writing.

His carriage was in the street, but as his driver was accustomed to wait upon the convenience of his master the doctor gave him no orders.

It was not long before another carriage rolled up, and from it descended Zareta and Rosa Baetta, who immediately entered the front office.

(To be continued.)

## SCIENCE.

AN order has been received at Chatham Dockyard, directing the construction of a target of unusual strength, to be used at Shoeburyness in the trials which are about being carried out with various descriptions of artillery, for the purpose of ascertaining the effects of vertical firing.

A GREAT TURKISH BRIDGE.—A French concern, the Compagnie des Chantiers de la Seyne, is understood to have been charged by the Turkish Government with a colossal work—a great girder bridge of boats to unite Stamboul to the suburb of Galata. The length of the bridge will, it is affirmed, be no less than 6,000ft.

NAPOLEON'S PRIZE TO ARTISTS.—The Emperor of the French offered some time ago a prize of 4,000*fr.* for the most complete work of art executed in France within the past five years. There were nine competitors, whose claims were seriously considered: three painters, three sculptors, and three architects. After much voting, the prize has been adjudged to M. Duc, architect (firm of Duc & Domme), for the new Palais de Justice, the design of which is remarkable rather for propriety and elegance than for novelty. The architect of the new opera-house, it has been said, would have received the prize had his building been finished.

### INFLUENCE OF METEORS ON HEALTH.

HERE is a subject for medical philosophers and those fond of abstruse questions. The possible influence of meteoric matter on the animal life of the earth is touched upon. Professor Herschel has succeeded in examining and analysing, by means of the spectroscopic light of seventeen of these bodies; and he has detected the well-known yellow bands produced by sodium in combustion. It is strange to consider what becomes of all the sodium thus dispersed throughout the upper regions of air, as there can be no doubt that, in some form or other—mixed or in combination,—it reaches the earth. The very air we breathe must at all times contain, in however

minute proportion, the cosmical dust thus brought to us from out the interplanetary spaces. As the different meteoric systems are differently constituted, the air we breathe is continually being impregnated with various forms of metallic dust. It is not certain that deleterious results do not occasionally flow from an overdose of some of the elements contained in meteors.

As far as facts and dates are concerned, it might be plausibly maintained that a meteoric system has brought plague and pestilence with it. The "sweating sickness" has been associated (though not very satisfactorily, it must be allowed) with the thirty-third year return of great displays of November stars. A notion has ever been entertained that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was brought about by an unusually heavy downfall of sodium-laden meteors. Speculations and hypotheses of this kind, no doubt, make up some interesting reading; but they are, it appears to us, quite barren of all utility. We need not go to interplanetary spaces as the source of sodium compounds in the atmosphere. The spray of every wave that dashes itself against a rock or becomes beaten into surf, causes the dissipation of a certain amount of salt into the atmosphere; and Prof. Roscoe goes so far as to conjecture that the soda, which all accustomed to work at all with the spectroscopic know to be present everywhere, may, by its antiseptic properties, exert a considerable influence in maintaining the public health. The invigorating and beneficial effects of sea breezes may be due to the large amount of soda, in a minute state of subdivision, which they contain. When invalids go to the seaside—which, indeed, all the world seems bent on doing just now,—they little think that they are possibly being cured in more senses than one.

THE CARTRIDGE FOR THE NEW RIFLE.—It appears that the question of some farther change in the cartridge for the Martini-Henry rifle is to be entertained. Undoubtedly if we can get a stronger cartridge it will be an advantage. The great length of the present cartridge would render it liable, we think, to become bent and injured on service; and a long thin cartridge is not a convenient form for packing and handling. Therefore, if the cartridge is to be strengthened we trust that it will be accomplished not by retaining the present dimensions and using thicker metal, which means greater weight and expense, but by reducing the length. A plan is, we understand, now before the Government for effecting this without any diminution of charge, and without employing compressed powder. The body of the cartridge is simply made larger, tapering down to the diameter of the bore forward. The cartridge thus has some likeness to a bottle, of which the tapered portion is the neck. This cartridge is very much stronger than the present pattern, although the same thickness of coiled brass is used. It has all the new improvements, such as the thick internal lacquer and paper lining, which the experience of India has shown to be necessary; and the bullet would, we presume, be varnished, and the cap-chamber be made of copper. "Some of these 'bottle-nosed' cartridges were tried before Colonel Fletcher's committee had concluded their report, but as the accuracy of shooting was inferior to that of the cartridges which had been used throughout, and as the latter had exhibited no defects, it was thought unnecessary to delay the report until the details of the 'bottle-nosed' cartridge could be so modified as to give the necessary accuracy. Thus, for the time, this construction of cartridge was put on one side; but it is now, we understand, to receive a farther trial.

THE GUN OF THE FUTURE.—Upon this subject Sir W. Armstrong, in his address at the meeting of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in Newcastle, last week, said: "I will now offer a few remarks on the interesting question of the probable future of guns. Upon the solution of this question depends the pattern of future ships, and also the policy of continuing or abandoning the struggle of armour plates against guns. From my previous remarks on the increase of pressure with which we have had to contend as we have increased the size of our guns, it might be inferred that we are now nearly reaching a limit beyond which the strength and endurance of our material would not enable us to pass. I am not prepared to say how far we could have advanced under the recently existing conditions; but, certainly every increase of size would have been attended with increase of difficulty. A new light, however, has just dawned upon the subject, which entirely alters the prospect. It has become apparent that the powder we have been using can be so modified as to produce the required effect with greatly less strain upon the gun. It may appear paradoxical that there should be a limit to the theoretical advantage of increasing the initial pressure of the gas evolved in the gun, but the apparent anomaly will disappear on examination. The action of expanding gas in a gun

is analogous to that of expanding steam in the cylinder of a steam-engine, and we all know the advantage in the case of steam of having a high pressure to begin with, provided a steam-jacket be used to maintain the material of the cylinder at a temperature equal to that of the entering steam. But in a gun we can have no provision analogous to the steam-jacket, and it would appear that it is owing to the necessary absence of such a provision that there is a limit to the increase of initial pressure, beyond which no gain of propelling force is realised."

### IN MORTAL PERIL.

"Good morning, sir—a lovely day."

I started rather guiltily from the stooping position in which I stood when the voice of my unknown colloquist had accosted me. In truth I was engaged in examining the padlocked moorings of a graceful little boat whose keel lay on the shore, half buried in rushes and low, luxuriant undergrowth, and meditating to myself how very agreeable a row across the crystal-clear lake would be through the fragrant silence of the purple August daybreak.

"Good morning," I responded, turning to meet the inquiring gaze of a tall, rather gentlemanly-looking personage, apparently about thirty-five years of age, who stood leaning against a fanciful little gate of painted wire. He was dark and handsome, with piercing eyes, a forehead slightly bald, and a jet-black moustache, twisted jauntily away from a small, nervous mouth, and his dress—cool white linen, with a narrow crimson silk tape confining his immaculate collar—was tasteful and faultless in the last degree. He had taken off his light straw hat to greet me, and now stood apparently awaiting some more definite explanation on my part.

"I beg your pardon, sir," I stammered, rather confused. "I—I hope I am not trespassing on private grounds?"

"Why, sir, you are undeniably on private grounds," returned the stranger, smiling, "but I think we won't call it by any such harsh name as trespassing. You are staying in the neighbourhood?"

"I am at the Lake House for the summer," I explained, "and I suppose my morning walk has led me farther than I at first intended."

"You are about six miles from the House, sir," returned my companion, courteously. "And, judging from your occupation when I came down to the gate, you would not object to crossing back by water?"

I laughed, and acknowledged the fact.

"To tell you the truth, sir, I was just thinking how cool and pleasant a short row would be. In fact, if the boat had not been fastened I should most assuredly have braved all consequences, and boldly adventured the experiment."

"I think we can overcome that objection," said the stranger, quietly turning to an old ruined tree whose gnarled trunk overhung the transparent tide, and drawing a key from its hollow depths. "Suppose we get up an appetite for breakfast together? I am not an inexperienced oarsman myself, and I suppose you understand the art of propelling a piece of timber on the water?"

"Just give me an opportunity, and see if I don't indicate my education in aquatic matters," I said, in high good-humour, springing into the fairy-like shell, followed by my now acquaintance. "Really, sir, this is an unexpected treat. I scarcely know how to thank you sufficiently for your courtesy."

"Then do not attempt it," said the gentleman, inclining his head with a dignified politeness, which impressed me more and more in his favour. "I assure you the gratification is entirely mutual. Pull to the right a little; we shall get entangled in yonder floating sheet of water-lilies if we are not careful. Upon my word this is a most perfect morning for the water."

It was, indeed. Across the diamond glitter of the lake the golden splendours of an August sunrise were just beginning to be reflected; while along the dense, dewy verdure of the shores a perfect orchestra of birds was breaking into melodious tuneful, and in the distance, a range of a dim, misty mountain peaks leaned against the horizon like far-off sentinels, almost losing their outline in the blue radiance of the cloudless sky.

"I wish I were an artist!" broke involuntarily from my lips. "I wish that I possessed that glorious gift of genius which would enable me to transfer this glowing landscape to the canvass!"

My companion smiled.

"Need a man be an artist to enjoy the beauties of such a scene as this?" he asked. "A little more towards yonder point, if you please, sir. Now we are out in the channel, and you can pull as hard or as easy as you choose. The boat will almost move of herself, in fact!"

He threw down his oars, and leaned back in the

stern, adjusting his straw hat so as to shield his eyes from the too vivid glare of the morning sunshine.

"One scarcely thinks of civilization in such a secluded spot as this," he murmured lazily. "I suppose there isn't a living soul within five miles of us, always excepting birds, fishes, and squirrels?"

"I suppose not," I assented.

"But nevertheless the forms and ceremonies of society cannot entirely be cast aside. May I know whom I have had the pleasure of helping to an hour's pleasure?"

I drew my card from my waistcoat pocket, and handed it across, with a smile.

"Vernon Cleverley oh? A very pretty name, sir—I congratulate myself on making your acquaintance. Will you allow me to reciprocate your frankness?"

He bowed low as he presented me with a crumpled bit of brown paper that he extracted from an old cigar-case. Upon it was inscribed in staring letters of red ink, the one word, "Albert."

"Albert who?" I involuntarily questioned.

"Albert, sir!" returned my companion, starting into a sitting posture, and regarding me with stern dignity. "Prince Albert, sir! Albert of England, Scotland, and Wales!"

I stared at him, aghast. Was the man mad, or dreaming?

"To your knees, sir!" he said with sharp, sudden imperiousness. "Have you no reverence for royalty?"

I obeyed his quick sign, almost before I knew what I was doing. He smiled complacently, at the same time drawing a gaudy tinsel star from his pocket, and gravely affixing it to the left breast of his coat.

"Yes my friend," he went on, impressively, "you are now in the presence of the Prince Consort of Great Britain! Men have amused themselves by disseminating the idle tale that I was dead—that's all they know about it. I am not dead; and what is more, I never shall die. I am privileged with the gift of everlasting existence. As long as I wear this jewelled star, death can never come near me!"

I felt the cold perspiration oozing from every pore in my body; I could almost feel myself grow pale, as I became fully convinced that I was out upon the solitary lake alone with a madman! I had heard, when first I came to this mountain retreat that there was a large "*Maison Sanitaire*" somewhere in the vicinity, but I had never given the affair a second thought. Now I was reaping the consequences of my own folly and recklessness.

His dark, piercing eyes roved restlessly from object to object, as he wandered on. Suddenly they rested on my appalled countenance.

"You don't believe what I am saying!"

The remembrance of what I have often read and heard about the expediency—nay, the positive necessity that existed for indulging monomaniacs to the top of their bent, in whatever whim might possess their minds, occurred to me, and I hastened to reply:

"Of course I believe it! Why shouldn't I?"

"Ah, why shouldn't you, indeed? But people are so sceptical, now-a-days. Take care; where are you going?"

I had thought to take advantage of the new path into which his troubled mind had wandered, to divert our course a little more shoreward, but his cunning, roving eye was upon me in an instant.

"It—it is getting very hot here," I stammered. "I thought perhaps we should find it cooler on shore!"

"Ah-h-h!" he hissed, putting his face so close to mine as to glare up into my eyes, under the very shadow of my wide-brimmed hat; "you're a traitor and a hypocrite, like all the rest of 'em! But I'm prepared for you. See!"

And with a burst of laughter, so dissonant that the very tides seemed to tremble and quiver, he flashed a long, sharp knife in the air, describing a circle of gleaming light around his head. My blood seemed turned to ice in my veins as it dazzled across my vision.

"Pat up the knife, your royal highness," I said, counterfeiting an off-hand ease that I by no means felt. "What is the use of it between friends? Let's talk about Victoria."

I was the more anxious to secure his attention, as I saw moving figures among the undergrowth on the shore, scarcely half-a-mile away from us, the flutter of a white handkerchief, and then a total disappearance of the figures. Help was at hand, I felt quite sure, if I could only manoeuvre so as to reach it.

"Well, about Victoria," agreed the poor maniac, carefully sheathing the knife, and laying it down beside him. "She's a good woman, but—but she's so peculiar. Now, do you know," he said, moving close up to me, and speaking in a low, mysterious voice, "she won't let me alone?"

"No?"

"She won't. Sometimes she climbs up among the

stars at night, and sits there winking through my bedroom window all night long. Sometimes she comes jumping down from the clouds among the rain-drops, and sometimes—there she is now, with three pair of fins, and a face like a fish!"

He uttered a loud screech, as he looked down into the clear shining lake.

"Let's escape from her!" I exclaimed, vigorously seizing my oars; "she can't follow us on to dry land, that's certain. Pull away."

"No, she can't. We might hide among the woods, only, if she should turn into a squirrel, and jump up and down among the trees—she does sometimes!"

"Well, then, we'll borrow a gun, and dispose of her in short order," I said, still pulling desperately towards the shore, while the perspiration, cold and clammy as midnight dews, streamed down my temples.

"What are you in such a hurry for?" demanded my companion, rather morosely. "Hold up a little, can't you?"

I checked my exertions. Evidently he was in no humour to be trifled with.

"No hurry at all," I said, as calmly as possible; "only, you see, Victoria has nearly reached the boat, she is following us closely, and—"

"We are too near the shore," he interrupted abruptly.

We were within a few rods of the clustering bushes that I knew contained help. Oh, God! could I but have reached their friendly shelter! How like a mass of lead my heart sank in my bosom, as I saw him catch up the oars, and strike out once more in a contrary direction.

But as he turned his head away I caught up the sheathed knife, and flung it from me upon the shore.

"What's that?" he demanded, turning quickly round.

"It's Victoria," I said, as unconcernedly as I could. "Don't you think we ought to go ashore and see what has become of her?"

His restless eyes roved along the green bank.

"I don't know; what do you think?"

"Why, she's your wife, isn't she?"

"Yes, but—"

"And if you could once bring her to terms what would prevent you from assuming your proper station."

"That's very true. Here, head her in towards the land. I wonder I never thought of that before."

Poor fever-brained lunatic! Even in the consciousness of my own mortal peril my heart ached for the crazy flights of his sick fancy.

We were close to the friendly land; the long silver-green tresses of the willows almost touched my throbbing forehead, when my strange comrade started to his feet with a yell that aroused all the echoes floating over the peaceful lake.

"Traitor! spy! double-dyed villain! you have been deceiving me! Your hirelings lurk among yonder bushes."

He sprang towards me like an infuriated tiger. At the same instant the shore seemed to become alive with hurrying figures, and with a last impulse I caught up the rope that lay coiled in the bottom of the boat, with one end affixed to the iron hooks along the edge, and threw it desperately shoreward. I could see a tall form plunging waist deep into the water to grasp at it, and then the clinging arms of my terrible companion were wreathed around me, and I knew no more!

"Are you better, sir?"

"Better? Yes—no—I can't tell. Where am I?"

"Here, at the little shore inn, snug in bed; but you've had a stormy time of it. What on earth possessed you to go out in a boat with that poor gentleman?"

"Mad, isn't he?" I questioned, with all the frightful occurrences of the morning crowding back upon my mind, as one may remember the hideous phantasies of a troubled dream.

"Mad as a March hare, sir; thinks he's Prince Albert. They say he's the worst case in all the asylum, sir—escaped last night, and has been wandering about the shores all the morning."

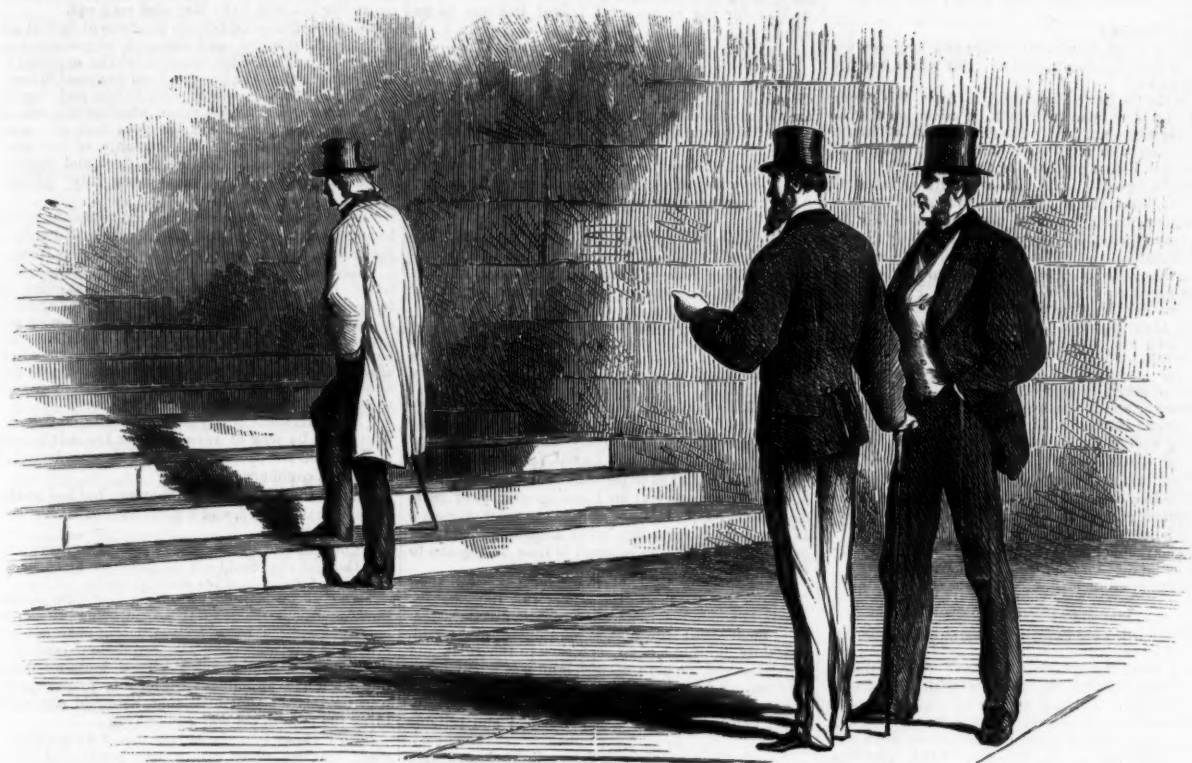
"Is he safe at last?"

"Yes, sir; they had hard work to get hold of him though. He threw you overboard as if you had been a willow twig, and then swam like a fish himself. Dick Dayton—that's his keeper, sir—says he's got the strength of twenty Samsons in those long arms of his."

So ended that long, frightful morning among the peaceful solitudes of Shadow Lake, but I carry an everlasting memorial of it, in the shape of a single lock of hair that gleams, white as silver, among the chestnut luxuriance that curls over my temples. While I live, and while that lock retains its ghastly whiteness, I shall never remember my peril and deliverance without a shudder.

A. R.





[FRANK TEMPLE PUZZLED.]

## EVELYN'S PLOT.

## CHAPTER XI.

And turned the thistles of a curse  
To types beneficent. *Wordsworth.*

This jealousy  
Is for a precious creature; as she's rare  
Must it be great; and as his person's mighty  
Must it be violent, and as he does conceive  
He is dishonoured by a man who ever  
Professed to him, why his revenge must  
In that be made more bitter. *Shakespeare.*

THE nurse's eyes were turned furtively to Arthur's face, with that same sharp, quick glance that she had cast on his cousin's.

Oliver smiled languidly.

"Thank heaven for that!" he said. "It were sad, indeed, to be such a complete wreck. I will soon be well now, dear Arthur. I must be well! So much depends on it."

"And so much depends on your being perfectly quiet, for at least a week longer," said a manly voice.

And looking round they saw Dr. Barber standing near the bed.

"Hark ye, Mr. Oliver Danvers, I shall have your door locked, and no one but your nurse admitted to the room, if you go on like this. It is simple suicide, and if you don't care for yourself, you might have a little regard for my reputation in pulling you through. Nurse, I thought better of you."

But the nurse had retired to a distant part of the room on some pretext, and when she returned to the bedside, her face was as passionless and pale as ever.

"I am here to carry out your orders, sir," she said, quietly; "and if you are good enough to let the gentlemen hear them, they will not think me impertinent in trying to do my duty."

"Then they are simply these," he said—"simply these: Perfect quiet for at least two days, and then we will see how the patient goes on; but I promise nothing as to relaxation of the interdict under a week."

And giving Arthur a good natured nod, he hastily turned him out of the room, while he proceeded to examine the patient more particularly, with the assistance of Nurse Fleming.

At least there was no danger of the fatal negligence, which had nearly cost Oliver his life, being repeated.

For Mrs. Fleming literally seemed to take no rest, night or day, from the first period of her stay in the sick chamber.

The slightest movement of the patient was sufficient to arouse her from her apparent slumber in the easy chair that was her resting place for the night, and never was there five minutes irregularity in the administering of the slightest remedy ordered by the doctor, during any hour of the twenty-four.

And more than once, when Oliver awoke, he saw the pale face bending over him with the most tender solicitude in the sad eyes and woe-stricken mouth.

She appeared to be performing a labour of love, to judge from the great and untiring tenderness which she displayed.

Once—indeed, perhaps it might be a dream-like fancy—once Oliver awoke with the idea that he felt a light touch of lips on his forehead.

But, when he really aroused and opened his eyes, he only saw the tall figure of the nurse standing by the bedside, with the same passionless calm that was the peculiar characteristic of her face and movements.

Perhaps he had been dreaming of Evelyn, for the eyes appeared to him for the moment to have some of the dark beauty of those which he had so often watched in every variety of expression, and which were so captivating in every change of mood.

Frank Temple had just emerged from the hot, weary atmosphere of a Westminster Hall Court. His case had been brought to the comfortable conclusion of "judgment deferred," and hot, tired and annoyed, he had lounged into St. James's Park, intending at once to cool his system and to divert his thoughts by the comparatively fresh air, and the grateful influence of flowers and green trees, and bright waters dancing in the afternoon sun.

But his intentions were in a measure frustrated by the unexpected apparition of Clarence Fernley, just crossing the parade ground from Whitehall to the Duke of York's column, with that ineffable air of self-complacency and calm disgust at every sight and sound which at all partook of ordinary everyday—and, as he termed it, plebeian—life that ever marked his aristocratic features.

Now, be it understood that we do not at all represent this same fastidious self-engrossment as "aristocratic," but simply an attribute of character which belonged to a man who was in truth not only well born, but really high-bred-looking in his physical contour.

And Clarence had perhaps rather cultivated and indulged the vice of which we speak from the very circumstance that he had neither wealth to support his pretensions, nor the undoubted and distinguished talent that could have supplied its place. Nothing

is a greater mistake than to paint our upper ten thousand as living with upturned eyes, that disdain to look upon the solitary and ordinary affairs and doings of life.

'Tis only those whose position is critical, or heads most girlishly light, who fear to look down lest they should fall.

And with this passing protest we return to the exquisite Mr. Clarence Fernley, in his dainty progress through the nurses and children, fruit stalls, and "new milk" vendors, who infested that region, and even dared to criticise his faultless "get up" and refined bearing.

It might be that his eye was searching in vain for something more congenial to their usual quiet sphere, when they fell on the form of his working, but yet well-born and better educated friend, Frank Temple.

The lawyer might in an ordinary way have tried to avoid the vapid exquisite, but yet they had been school boys together—Frank had rescued the nobly-born youth out of more than one desperate scrape at school and college, and had, as a natural consequence, cherished a sort of liking for him ever since. And therefore it was that he, so different in occupation, and character, and mode of thought, had yet kept up a degree of intimacy and good-fellowship in their widely diverging spheres.

"Ha, Temple, my boy—well met," Clarence said, in his usual slow tones. "It is refreshing to see a face one knows in this weary desert."

And he gave a glance at the innocent cows and sweetmeat stalls that occupied a corner of the large space where he was standing.

Temple smiled.

"And what brings the fastidious Mr. Clarence Fernley into the plebeian neighbourhood of her Majesty's residence?" he asked, with a significant glance in the direction of Buckingham Palace.

"Now don't be satirical, Temple; you've enough of that in those dirty dens that you call law courts, I should think, without wasting your logic on a poor, unpretending innocent. If royalty has had taste or bad luck, even my loyalty will not drag me in its train. Thank heaven, the reigning sovereign is guiltless in the matter; and so I am innocent of high treason, or unchivalrous aspersions, when I call the place simply execrable."

"But what brought you here?" again asked Frank.

"I thought you sheltered in the Carlton, till at least an hour from this."

"Yes, but even I am blessed or cursed with social and relative duties," said Clarence, with a shrug; "and I had promised to do a little interest at the Horse Guards for a—cousin of mine—that is

to say—though to you only I may confess it—a nephew."

Frank laughed.

"Never mind, Clarence; uncles and nephews are often in their cradles together. But where are you bound now?"

"To the Carlton; I promised to meet this young churl who is up from the North, on condition that he carefully abstained from publishing our relationship. Come along with me, Frank, and have a tumbler of iced claret, before proceeding to the 'Row.'"

Temple had disengaged his arm with an intended negative, but a sudden glimpse of the same remarkable figure, whom they had seen in Rotten Row on the evening when our tale opened, suddenly altered his determination, and he gave an assenting nod.

The man was ascending the steps to the column, a few paces only before the friends. Frank's eyes were intently fixed on the firm yet leisurely movements, that appeared inconsistent with the snow-white hair and rounded shoulders of the individual in question.

It was a strange mingling of youth and age, or rather of infirmity and of vigour, in that look and movement; and it was possibly that which excited the extreme interest of the sharp-eyed barrister.

They walked but a few paces behind him, for perhaps the whole length of Pall Mall, and then he disappeared in the door of the "Union" and no farther trace of him could be seen, though Frank did throw up a quick glance at the windows, as they passed the club house.

"Remarkable get-up that, Frank?" observed Clarence, as he noticed his friend's curious gaze.

"A remarkable man, too, or I am much mistaken. Do you remember him, that night you were relating the story of that pretty girl, in Rotten Row?"

"Think I do; but really one sees so many nobodies who try to catch the real tint themselves by being in contact with the genuine 'amber' colour that I really cannot charge my memory with a hundredth part of them. Fatigue enough to remember one's friends and acquaintances as they grow every season."

"Especially when seasons multiply on one's memory," said Frank, significantly. "But, Clarence, do not pretend to be such a fool as to confound that man with a herd of nobodies. I gave you credit for a sharper eye for real blood and breeding."

"Now—well, yes, I do think there is something in the man that looks rather of our style; shouldn't take him for a grocer nor even a Custom House clerk. But, by the way, that was a queer business, Frank, that you should be so curious about the Danvers' very night when they disappeared from public life—of course, you've heard all about it?"

"Only innuendoes in the public prints," was the reply. "Of course, you are in the secret, Clarence, and, of course, you will bestow the benefit of your universal comprehension on my unknowing self."

Clarence laughed—at least, as much as he ever could take the trouble to laugh.

"Well, Frank, you gave me the benefit of your plodding at Virgil and Euclid, more years back than we need remember; and as you are not often afflicted with an excess of curiosity, I may venture to indulge it in this case without prejudice, however, to future tranquillity. It would be a dangerous precedent otherwise."

"Don't alarm yourself. It would weary me far more than you to inquire into the history of the Lady Florences, and honourable Floclindas of fashionable life; but I am strangely interested in this family, I confess."

"Well, there's half-an-hour to spare, and we may as well spend it in the cool library instead of at that burning window. We shall have quiet and solitude there, you may be certain."

"The most unfrequented room in the whole house, I expect," replied Frank, laughing. "Well, all the better for a burning June day, especially when one has been baked in a legal oven to parchment."

The friends sauntered into the cool apartment, where, as Clarence had predicted, only some half-dozen men were lounging in the different recesses of the windows and bookcases.

The claret was drunk with refreshing gusto, and then Frank repeated his question.

"Well, how much of the penny-a-lining paragraphs were true?"

"More than usual, I fancy," was the reply. "There was no doubt that the eldest of the young men whom you saw that night was concerned in the raid on a private gaming house in King Street, whose very existence was only known to a very few favoured or shrewd ones, as the case may be. Also, that there was a very queer business as to the young fellow who nearly murdered him in trying to escape, and then rushed off to a midnight interview with the pretty cousin of the unlucky wight. There is no doubt of all this, and I am also informed, on excellent authority, that she refuses any clue to the identity of

the person in question, and that the matter is only waiting for the recovery of Oliver Danvers to be sifted by the police."

"And the establishment in King Street?"

"Is closed, and the tenants loyanted the night after, spite of the vigilance of the police. Various disguises, I suppose, and perhaps a private door, are the explanations of the mystery."

Frank listened with a musing and somewhat annoyed air.

"I should be very much astonished if that girl would be guilty of anything wrong," he said, gravely. "I never saw a more refined and pure expression in a face."

"My dear fellow, it's in the blood," he said, "it's in the blood. Didn't I give you a hint that the mother had been rather skittish in her youth, and then taken the bit between her teeth at last and gone off at a tangent?"

"You did imply something of the sort. What was it? It must have been long before your day that it occurred, but I know you have traditional as well as personal experiences in your repertoire, and I really should like the story in *extenso*, if you can give it."

"Well, I always did have a taste for useful knowledge," said the exquisite, laughing affectedly; "and my respected aunt, Lady Emily, who left me the poor pittance on which I exist, favoured me with many a useful hint as to the fashionable life and times of her contemporaries; so I can gratify your curiosity, as it happens. Have another tumbler of claret, and then we can get the bottle dispatched and the cause *célébre* gone into before it is time to adjourn to the park."

Frank briefly declined the beverage, and then Clarence Fernley began the tale of the Danvers' *reproche*, in which his friend was so strangely interested.

"I must tell it you almost as I heard it," he said, languidly lighting a cigar, contrary to the rules and regulations of the club, of which he was a privileged member. "And I beg you to remember that I am not at all responsible for the exact particulars, only that I had them from an unquestioned and reliable source."

A puff, till the cigar was fairly lighted, and then he resumed:

"Old Mark Danvers, the uncle of your great admiration, was left young, as I have been told, as his own master, and the guardian of his beautiful sister Gertrude; and the said beautiful sister, being a great many years younger than Mark, and possessing a very vivid idea of her rights and her attractions, was not very amenable to his guidance and authority. And as Mark got on in life, and the damsel became initiated in more fashionable circles, and found that her beauty was a passport when the door was inaccessible to her brother's wealth, she was by no means improved in docility and humility. Indeed, I have no opinion of any pretty woman that has not a proper estimate of herself; I always fancy it must betoken a great want of appreciation of the beautiful. And then, Frank, it leads to all kinds of complications and results, does that same misplaced humility. It is no glory whatever to win a smile from a girl who is obliged to any blind fool for a glance of homage, no distinction to get the ear of a woman who is ready to simper at the compliments of the first fool that addresses her."

"No—give me a woman, who appreciates herself and then she will appreciate you—and Gertrude Danvers was decidedly one of my sort of belles, from all I have heard."

"She flirted to a proper extent with all who were worth flirting with, and threw over in a very disdainful style the crowd that presumed to gaze at her beauty, and claim her notice; and this was in her favour in the game she played, that Danvers lost his wife, at the birth of the second child—the said wife apparently being a fearfully strong minded and right minded, and proper woman, who would have held the reins pretty tight over her young sister-in-law in her games with the worshippers at her shrine."

"Gertrude now ruled supreme."

"Only a dull doll of a *chaperon* was sanctioned without being a restraint upon her fancies and flirtings, and I presume the damsel's will grew stronger and stronger from being thus indulged, growing from what it fed upon—oh, Frank?"

Temple nodded assent, and the gentleman proceeded:

"Gertrude reckoned rather without her host though; the man she chose from her devotees was the finest, and about the most scampish, so far as I can divine, of her list of swains."

"But he was the handsomest, and the wittiest, and the most adroit in pleasing and angling with the pretty gold fish he wanted to catch. And Miss Gertrude declared heartily in his favour, when requested politely by her brother to decide on a husband."

"When—lo!—pish! Mr. Mark Danvers puts his veto on the case, and suggests that the name of Hugh

Rivers his own especial *protegé* and *choise* should be put in the list, vice Basil Maynard resigned."

"Miss Gertrude did not see the force of this at all, and pouted, stormed, and stamped, as passionately and prettily as a spoiled beauty might be expected to do. But then the said Basil had not proposed in form, and all she could do was to write to him and request his advice in the urgent crisis, whether she was to take Mr. Hugh Rivers and his gold into the scale against—well, I suppose the contents of the other scale were described in the prettiest and vaguest manner that was current in a young lady's phraseology."

"Of course, she expected that the confidant would become the champion, and that Basil would rush to the rescue, like his saintly namesake in other days."

"But the age of chivalry was over. She got a letter from the lover, deploring the sacrifice he felt called upon to make, the agony he was about to endure, but adding that all the laws of honour and generosity obliged him to relinquish all claim to her hand; and that it was far more rational to be miserable on five thousand a-year than miserable on five hundred. In plain words, that it was far more easy to bear a full sorrow than an empty one."

"Miss Gertrude was young, romantic, and indignant; and, by way of revenge, took the advice, and made herself and the unlucky Hugh about as wretched as woman could accomplish."

"Hugh was a good fellow, they say, but had no idea of being hen-pecked, and a great idea of taking care of his pretty wife."

"The wife had a great idea of having her own way, and thought she could not demand too much in recompense for the sacrifice she had made."

"And as we learned at school, that two parallel lines could not meet, so these opposing views un- luckily diverged in entirely different channels, and produced anything but the exquisite harmony of kindred souls—oh, Frank? Great bosh, no doubt, but Hugh had an unlucky faith in its propriety, and was terribly disappointed that he could not quite bring his wife to his way of thinking."

"Now these two phases of this 'want of love' made matters worse rather than better, and no one but Mark Danvers, and perhaps Hugh Rivers himself, doubted how things would end."

"And Basil Maynard now appeared again on the scene. A great friend of the husband; a respectful admirer of the wife—devoted to the interests of the one; anxious for the pleasure and gratification of the other—he was the very perfection of *l'amie de la maison*."

"Hugh was not in the secret of the little passages between his wife and his friend in former days. They had been completely kept from him by Mark, and therefore there was no cause to mistrust the amiable and fascinating regard of the lately returned Basil from a long tour, undertaken from many kinds of prudential motives."

"It was a sight for angels—that happy trio. The unsuspecting husband; the beautiful and idolised wife; the devoted, unselfish friend—forgetting his own disappointment in the happiness of her he loved and the friend he esteemed."

"But alas for human perfection! The little *tableau* vanished at a blow of the wand of the enchanter who created it."

"One fine August day, when the gaieties of the season were fairly over, and nothing more was to be lost, Mrs. Gertrude Rivers was missing, and also Basil Maynard."

"It was very well arranged. The lady had just come into ten thousand pounds, which was to be hers at twenty-five."

"And it was really refreshing to witness the union of love and prudence that Basil's arrangements evinced. Wise people could not but admire; but Hugh Rivers was unreasonable, and was outrageous with grief, rage, and despair."

"Indeed, he had no reason in his grief, and it is currently reported—not only went mad, and lost his property in his madness—but actually died in the same unfortunate state in America, where he had taken a voyage in one of the delirium fits that led him half over the habitable globe in search of the missing ones. At least that was supposed to be the reason of his half-insane proceedings."

"And he is dead long since then, I presume?" said Frank, much interested.

"Yes—at least, ten years ago. I remember well hearing of it from my aunt, just before she took her departure from this sublimity world. She was tremendously excited by the news."

"Then, of course, he left his children a good fortune to make up for their other disadvantages," observed Frank.

"No—that is the height of his folly. If the man had had ten grains of common sense, he would have whistled the woman off, got advice, and then married one of the heap of girls, who would gladly have



taken him, children and all. For he was a very fine-looking man, and singularly agreeable, my aunt declared, and she was a fastidious judge of men and manners. But, instead of that, he let his wits go wool-gathering, wandered about Europe like a lunatic, and left his affairs in the hands of a man who made ducks and drakes of his property. And thus, when he went off the hooks, he left the boy and girl—who had been the charge of her maternal uncle—with very little more than enough to keep the one in clothes, and give the other a pittance to eke out the income he received from a grateful country. And this completed the tragedy-farce, that was acted by all parties concerned."

And Clarence brushed out the ashes from his cigar, and rose to look out at a very young and pretty girl who was just passing by on horseback *en route* for the park.

"Ha—the new importation from Lady Blassett's school-room," he said. "Not a bad specimen, either, of the species which I am told is still increasing yearly. A marriage and a christening are among the festivities of the season at Lady B's establishment."

Frank glanced idly at the girl, with the listless glance of one who rather obeys an instinct than gratifies any curiosity by looking at the object thus indicated.

But his attention appeared caught by the young girl thus pointed out.

"Good heavens! how like that fair young girl in Rotten Row, that night we saw the Danvers," he said. "Don't you remember pointing her out to me as one of the prettiest and gayest girls in the promenade?"

Clarence gave a second glance.

"Yes, perhaps it is; and by the way that pretty damsel disappeared, as entirely as the fair Evelyn, from all public places of resort. One would think they were sisters from the sympathy of their movements, though there is not much likeness between them, I confess. But come, Frank, I am literally nauseated with the very name of Danvers. You lawyers are used to diving into a case till you have routed out every tiny bit of scandal or dirt that belongs to it. But I hate being sickened out with a subject. Half-an-hour is enough for the most interesting debate in the House of Commons, and a quarter-of-an-hour's subject in a *salon* would bore any civilised creature except a pope or a bishop."

And Clarence lounged from the room, deliberately and thoughtfully followed by Frank, whose mind was far more occupied with the tale he had heard of the wife's sin and the husband's sorrow, than the witty and dictatorial dictums of his companion.

"You are coming with me, Frank," said Clarence, glancing, however, doubtfully enough, at the rather dusty suit of his friend, which savoured rather of the dull law courts of Westminster than the brilliant *Ronde du Rok*.

"Not to-night, thank you. I have a brief to look over. It is the height of the season for barristers as well as belles. Good evening."

And the lawyer hailed a hansom, and in a few minutes was dashing "over sisters and brothers," as poor Hood phrases it, to the dull chambers in the Temple, while the more favoured butterfly of fashion was lounging slowly and critically along the busy portions of Piccadilly to Hyde Park and its glittering throng.

## CHAPTER XII.

There is a rock, and nigh at hand  
A shadow in a weary land,  
Who in that stricken rock hath rest,  
Finds water gushing from its breast. Neale.  
"Pray you sit by us and tell a tale."  
"Merry or not shall it be?"  
"As merry as you will!"  
"A sad tale's best for winter."  
I have one of ghosts and goblins."

OLIVER DANVERS was much better. Out of danger, of all visible and absolute danger. So the doctor said, certainly; so the nurse assented, pensively and deliberately—as was her wont in all she said or did. And Evelyn! Evelyn thanked heaven in her inmost heart for the mercy thus vouchsafed. At least that terrible agony was spared to her, and the guilt of murder was not to be suspended over the head of him who was implicated in the wretched mystery.

Still her heart was heavy and clouded. The absence and silence of Cecil; the long and slow convalescence which was the utmost that could be hoped for Oliver; the new anxieties that had sprung up even with the new instincts and feelings of her heart were all weighing on her spirits.

The tree of knowledge has been the tree of misery for many a long generation since the world began, but in no case more than in that of a woman first awakening to a sense of the suspense, the shame, the terrors of an unacknowledged, and it may be, unrequited love

Evelyn now knew that she loved Oliver with the deep, true love that a woman feels but once in life. And she knew, too, that there were circumstances attending her story that made the love one that could scarcely be gratified without a loss of self-respect and womanly honour. She, the daughter of the disgraced Gertrude, the ruined Hugh—could she bring that disgrace to the hearth and the name of Oliver Danvers without risking his love and her own happiness? Could she, the daughter of such parents, the sister of the ruined and fugitive Cecil, ever dare to hope, or to look forward to be Oliver's wife, even if he loved her? It could scarcely be—without a selfish disregard of him she so prized and honoured.

But did he love her? Did he even think of her save as a sister, a cousin. Sometimes the memory of the look and tone which had greeted her on waking from that deathlike stupor, made her believe that it was so. Then she asked herself whether she could really wish for it. Whether she could desire that a feeling, which could only be productive of misery to both, should exist.

Was it wise to desire what would entail on Oliver either suffering or disgrace—what would test to the utmost her own firmness and self-sacrifice. Yet, with a woman's thirst for love—a woman's natural shrinking from unrequited affection, and the lonely desolation of such a life—she was so consistently inconsistent as to shrink from the idea of Oliver's indifference, with a dreary sadness that she could not conquer or cheer. And it was perhaps from this mingling and struggle of feelings that she withheld more than she otherwise would have done from the sick room and the now convalescent patient.

Mrs. Fleming was so attentive, so skilful in her duties, so watchful and so tender in her obedience to every direction of the physician, that it was violating no duty to leave Oliver to her care.

And Evelyn dared not—literally dared not—retard the invalid's recovery by the unnecessary obtrusion of her pale cheeks and saddened eyes in the sick room. She knew not that every hour of her absence was counted by the sufferer, and that his eyes would turn wistfully to the door, at the time when he might certainly expect her coming, with a sad, expectant, half-reproachful gaze, that spoke of his earnest longing for the entrance of some beloved one.

The nurse saw this.

What did she not see? That would have been a more difficult problem to solve.

Never did a change in the invalid's countenance, or the faintest murmur of his voice escape her. Never did a change of feeling, a fancy, a natural desire seem to need explanation in words.

By a strange instinct she appeared to divine, and by a kindly, womanly devotion, she hastened at any self-sacrifice to gratify every wish of Oliver's.

A remarkable woman was that Nurse Fleming. Like a gray, dark cloud, she seemed to haunt the sick chamber. Yet like a summer cloud it was not ungrateful during the convalescence of her charge.

It was a kind of repose to the feeble invalid to feel that that nurse was ever watchful of his wants, and yet never expectant of his notice—never garrulous—never anxious for his breaking the silence that usually reigned in the chamber, save for the brief interchange of the necessary dialogue between two so constantly thrown together—one who was ever ready to reply—yet, apparently, scarcely desirous to speak.

Mrs. Fleming was certainly a jewel of a nurse to one of Oliver's temperament. But there were times, as he grew stronger, when the silence grew irksome, and again the woman seemed to divine, though she could perhaps scarcely have found courage or inclination to break the reserve that had kept their intercourse so formally brief and terse.

But accident effected what would not otherwise have been accomplished—a greater familiarity and confidence between the nurse and her charge.

Oliver had now left his bed, and was lying on a sofa in the dressing-room adjoining his chamber.

And, still as he grew stronger, Evelyn's visits became more rare and brief; and still the tedium of the hours became more keenly felt with increasing strength.

Besides Arthur was compelled to be absent for some hours every day, at an examination for a commission that had at last been offered to him, and which, with some little reluctance, he was thus compelled to accept, when most unwelcome. It was on one of the hot July days that thus passed so tardily, that Oliver at last requested the nurse to give him a volume to read, from the shelves in his library.

"I dare not!" she said faintly; "it would try your eyes too severely. I will, if you will allow me, read to you a little; I think you would be less wearied with that, and you can stop me in a moment if you find it too fatiguing."

Oliver smiled faintly. He fancied that the task that was always so trying even to a thoroughly educated person could scarcely be a very easy one for one in the nurse's position. To read aloud well, and especially to read such books as he would have wished to hear, was a trial which few can stand with impunity. But the calm decision which the woman ever displayed, when she deemed it her duty, was easily read in the determined air with which she waited for his reply. And when it came in a kind of half weary and hopeless assent, she gave a faint, half-veiled smile, as if she could well read his thoughts.

"What shall I get for you?" she asked.

Oliver named a favourite author. She shook her head.

"That would be too sad for you just now," she said. "Let me choose better for you than that."

He almost laughed.

"Go then," he said; "there are the shelves. Go and select any that you can from them. I shall see what is your taste."

And Oliver was almost excited to an animated eagerness as the woman crossed the room and began to inspect the bookshelves.

She returned with a volume, which Oliver at once recognised as one of Cowper's. He was astonished at the choice among the volumes of novels, poetry, and history, which the shelves contained, but he deemed it an accident, from some casual acquaintance with the name, and quietly awaited to see the result of the selection.

Mrs. Fleming sat down at a distance of sufficient respect, while yet enabling him with ease to catch the sound of her voice, and began to read. Never had he been more charmingly surprised.

The soft, low voice, that was sad and depressing in ordinary speaking, was musical and soothing in more continuous reading.

Her pure accent, her just appreciation of the subject, her flexible intonation, all spoke of one who possessed not only physical gifts but matured cultivation to bring them to perfection.

He lay like one listening to a sweet strain of music, as she read.

It was a delicious variety from the monotony of the last few weeks. A variety without fatigue. For the tones did not grate on the nerves, and there was no difficulty in comprehending the refined pronunciation and clear tones of the voice. At length she paused.

"That is enough now," she said; "I should only weary you. Another day I may read longer without any risk."

He looked gratefully at her.

"I am very fortunate in having such an accomplished nurse," he said. "You are as kind and skilful as the most trained professional could be; and yet it is clear that you can never have anticipated such an occupation."

Her face flushed painfully, and Oliver, with instinctive delicacy, at once changed the subject.

"I mean," he said, "that I am especially fortunate since I am not so happy as to have a mother or sister to attend me; and—Miss Rivers has somewhat deserted the sick room since she saw I was in such good keeping."

The woman for once seemed inclined to talk.

"You have no sister, then?" she said; "only the cousin I have seen?"

"No; my grave mature self is the only child left from some four or five born to my father and mother; out of these there was but one sister, and she, poor dear, died when there was deep sorrow in the house."

"When—when Mrs. Danvers died, I suppose?" the woman said, slightly averting her face.

"No, no," he said; "it was nearly three years after my mother died in giving her birth, but there are griefs almost worse to bear than death, and during my father's absence, in a time of great sorrow, the child died at a bathing place where she had been sent with her nurse, and was buried before my father could even be apprised of her death. Poor little Nelly, I just remember her, though I was a school boy, with little taste for infant girls when she was born, and she was so delicate that she was often away when I returned home for my holidays. But she would have grown up very pretty, I should think, from what I remember of her."

"As pretty as Miss Rivers?" said the woman, dreamily.

"Perhaps—yes—I cannot possibly guess," said the young man, rather sharply.

And then, as if he felt he had been talking with unaccountable freedom of his family affairs to a stranger, and a stranger in a humble position—a mere hireling dependent in his family, he let his head fall back on the pillow, and seemed inclined to sleep.

Mrs. Fleming gently drew down the blinds, and then, moving stealthily to a distant chair, sat down.

and inclining her head on her hand, remained motionless and still, as was her wont. But the large tears stole through the thin fingers as she sat in the quiet and darkened chamber, and when she uncovered her face, at some slight movement of the invalid, the look of sadness that was habitual to her had deepened and sharpened into actual woe.

Oliver saw it through his closed eyes. It was a strange idea to him, and it might be a pleasant excitement, the speculation on that singular woman. At anyrate, it furnished him materials for a dreamy reverie and speculation till he sank into one of the unconscious slumbers that are the privilege and the concomitant of convalescence.

It was evening ere he awoke, and then the features of the nurse had resumed their usual calm expression, as of one with little aim in life save the duty to which that life is devoted.

"Nurse," he said, after lying for some minutes watching her preparations for the tea—that most refreshing and valued meal of the day to invalids—"nurse, should you be inclined to take a permanent situation if one were offered to you?"

She started; then a faint smile came over her face.

"You do not mean always to remain in want of a nurse, sir, I hope."

"No," he said, returning the smile; "nor do I think that you would find patience to wait on such a grown baby if I did attempt such an absurdity. But my father's life is, I cannot but hope, still to be prolonged for some time, and he is in a state that requires precisely the judicious and patient care that you have bestowed on me. Should you be willing to take charge of him, for a remuneration that would be more than equivalent to your present gains if not to services which cannot be bought by money? If you would, it would relieve my mind of a great care, more especially as I shall, perhaps, have duties that will take me away from home for some time, when I am well again."

The woman's eyes had been bent on the ground, but a strong shiver had gone through her frame, which puzzled Oliver to comprehend, as he spoke.

"You are afraid, perhaps, of so constant and arduous a duty?" he said, gently.

"No, no," she said; "only that I am not worthy—that is, I am afraid of my own capacities. Yet I would do my best to—to atone—atone, I mean, for any deficiency of skill."

Her manner was hurried, and her voice trembled to a degree that perplexed Oliver.

"I am afraid you have over-taxed your strength," he said, "in your devoted attendance on me. I shall insist on your having some relaxation before you begin your new duties. That is, if you consent to undertake them."

"Yes," she said, dreamily. "Yes, if you think I am fit—I will try. Heaven help me, poor, weak creature that I am."

"I am quite satisfied, and very thankful," he said, "and now let us drop the subject. You are certainly not equal to any agitation yet."

And Oliver took the tea which was trembling in her hands, with a kindly smile, and both relapsed into silence.

But when he had retired for the night, and the woman knelt by the couch in the ante-chamber, which was now her resting place during her patient's convalescence, the same wail might have been heard to go up to heaven:

"Heaven help me!"

Was that cry ever breathed in vain?

(To be continued.)

**THE AUSTRALIAN WILD HORSE.**—The wild horse of Australia will unquestionably, at no distant date, like the mustang of the South American pampas, occupy in vast numbers the almost boundless plains of the interior. On the South Australian border, in Victoria, where some few years ago wild horses were comparatively few in number, large herds are now to be found. During periods of continued drought these herds travel immense distances in search of pasture, and on some stations detract considerably from the value of the runs to the north-west. The neighbourhood of the mallee scrub at the present season appears to be a favourite resort for wild horses. Feeding on the plains in troops of from fifteen to thirty mares with colts at foot, the sire, a stallion whose progeny are usually of one colour, is most careful of his family, on the slightest alarm leading his charge at full speed under shelter of the almost impenetrable scrub. Several successful mustering of these steeds of the plain have been made of late, we are informed, and some of the colts broken in and sent to market, but, from the cheapness of horseflesh all over the colony the speculation has not paid. Many hundreds have been shot on the various sta-

tions, but apparently without reducing their numbers. Wild cattle in the neighbourhood of the mallee scrub have also become a complete nuisance. On the sheep stations beef of excellent quality is supplied all the year round as rations to the men employed. The wild cattle are hunted like the buffalo of the North American plains, and are said to be gradually increasing in numbers and spreading towards the Far North. The most astonishing circumstance attaching to these wild herds of cattle and horses is that, notwithstanding on the stations near their haunts sheep and other stock are dying very fast from the effects of the drought, these denizens of the plain appear in excellent health and are as sleek as moles. horses started on the plains, galloping at full speed, their unkempt manes floating in the wind, the speed of which they seem to equal. Their tails sweeping the ground—they present to the eye a perfect embodiment of beauty and freedom.

## TYRON, THE SHRINE-MAKER.

BY THE

Author of "The Black Knight's Challenge," &c.

### CHAPTER XVIII.

THE wave of rebellion had rolled over the city. The hand of the avenger had struck its terrible blow, and beneath the fell stroke thousands had fallen in a single night. Wickedness and crime, lust and debauchery, and tyranny and oppression, had all been swept away together. The hopeful people had studied well their vantage; and their plans had been formed with that directness and precision which comes of stern necessity; and they had acted with that entire unanimity which is born of the spirit of liberty. Fearful and bloody as had been the blow, it had been richly deserved wherever it fell.

The last vestige of strife had disappeared from Pompeii, and the magnificent mosaics of her courts and palaces had been cleansed of the terrible stain that had so lately made them unclean. There had been no indignities to the dead; but with solemn obsequies the mortal remains of those who had gone to their doom were consigned to sepulchres.

In the spacious court of the Forum were collected the freed Greeks.

"A king! A king!" cried many voices. "Let us have a king who will rule us justly, and protect the weak and the dependent."

"Who shall it be?" went from lip to lip.

"A king! A king!" came from those upon the outside.

The form of Hector was seen to rise upon the base of a column.

"Hector shall be our king!"

"No, no," replied the true-hearted freedman. "I am too far advanced in years; and, moreover, I am not capable. Let us elect a ruler of wit and intelligence."

"How shall we elect him?" asked Athos; and the question went from one to the other.

There was consultation around the tall column; and those who could crowd within earshot listened attentively.

"We must have a king," said Hector, stepping down from his elevated position; "for we should very soon suffer without a governing head. Some one must be recognised and obeyed; and with a king of our own choice we may be peaceful, happy, and prosperous."

"And how shall we choose?" asked Athos. "Little can be done in such a multitude of counsellors. A few may not do it to the satisfaction of the whole; and I see not how the whole can be brought to work together."

At that juncture the towering form of Tyron appeared upon the scene; and in an instant the air was rent with loud acclamations:

"Tyron shall be our king! He is the choice of heaven!"

The shrine-maker ascended to the place which Hector had occupied, and asked to be heard; and very quickly all was hushed to silence, and every ear was bent to listen.

"My Brothers, and Freemen of Pompeii," said Tyron, in tones that were distinctly heard throughout the vast space; "you demand a king; and, as the noble Hector hath told you, you need one to preside over your counsels. And, furthermore, your friend spoke truly when he said that your ruler should be a man of wit and intelligence. I cannot be your king; for I have other duties incumbent upon me—duties too long neglected. But I can point you to one who is every way worthy—and he is of your own blood—of the purest blood that ever flowed in Campania!"

"We will have him for our king! Give him to us! Who is he?"

"Brothers, listen to me. Do you remember Melanthon, the last unfortunate scion of the royal stock of Arbaces?"

"Aye," cried Hector. "We remembered him well when we struck for freedom and for vengeance. He was a Greek, and was heir to the throne. The Roman tyrant feared him, and murdered him."

And the multitude responded in remembrance of the Greek prince.

"And," pursued Tyron, "do you remember Eudocia, who, by favour of heaven, was cleansed of marital disability, and presided so long as Priestess in the Temple of Vesta?"

"Aye; and she was a Greek," said Hector.

"Know ye, then," continued the shrine-maker, "that Eudocia was the wife of Melanthon, and when her noble husband was put to death she bore an infant upon her bosom—and that infant, the child of the Greek prince. Should the Roman discover it, she would be robbed of her precious offspring. So she resolved to give her child into the care of another, and herself seek asylum in the temple of the goddess. And she gave the infant prince to the Roman patrician, Festus, who reared it as his own, and who gave to it his own name. And, my brothers, your prince still lives. You know him well. His kind heart saved him from destruction, and his many virtues are known to all. If you would know more, go ask those who have been his bondmen. It was because he was the son of Melanthon that Tyron sought a place beneath the same roof with him."

A low murmur ran through the multitude; but ere it grew to confusion Hector mounted the rostrum.

"Brothers!" he exclaimed, "the son of Melanthon hath been saved to us by the gods. He hath all the advantages of education; he hath travelled in other countries; and, above all else, he is good and true. Festus shall be our king! All hail to the voice of heaven!"

"Hail! hail! Festus, king of Pompeii!" arose upon the startled air. Lip after lip caught it up, until, in the end, every tongue had given free and glad response of approval.

The freedmen had chosen their king!

Around the royal throne of Pompeii beheld we now a different scene from that which last we saw there. Young Festus wore the crown and held the sceptre. The beautiful Myrrha stood there, with blushes upon her cheek, and happiness in her brimming eyes. By her side stood the faithful, loving Zorah; and near at hand was Saxones. At the foot of the throne stood Tyron, the centre of observation, and an object of interest and wonder.

Both Saxones and the young king looked troubled and perplexed; and even Myrrha wore, amid her gleams of happiness, slight shades of doubt and anxiety. A priest was in waiting, and around lay the paraphernalia for a royal wedding. All eyes were bent upon the mysterious shrine-maker in silent, anxious wonderment and suspense. At length he took a step forward, and fixed his gaze upon Saxones. The old man trembled with strange emotion, and from the shrine-maker his eyes wandered involuntarily to Myrrha. Tyron's glance followed in the same direction, and the shadows upon his face grew delicately soft and subdued as he looked upon the maiden. Finally he spoke, and all ears were eagerly bent to catch the slightest sound that should fall from his lips.

"Saxones," he said, "you no doubt wonder why I have taken so deep an interest in the welfare of your beautiful girl. I have had the most potent of reasons. But first—tell me this: is the hand of Myrrha yours to give to our youthful king?"

"I hold such a right to be mine," returned the old man.

His voice was broken, and his frame shook.

"Is Myrrha your child?"

"I have been a father to her."

"So you have," good Saxones; "but is she of your own flesh and blood?"

The old noble hesitated.

"Answer me!" pursued Tyron, authoritatively.

"She is not."

"Not my father?" cried Myrrha, lost in wonder and astonishment. And yet, at the moment, there was the dawning of a new life—the up-springing of a wondrous hope—in the soul of the adventurous maiden.

"No, sweet one," replied Saxones,—"thou art not of my blood. You came to me a poor wail, and I would have held you as mine own while I lived; but this strange man hath discovered my secret."

The gentle hand of Zorah held Myrrha back, while Tyron continued:

"My lord, how long since you adopted this child?"

"It is now more than eighteen years," replied Saxones, after a little thought.

"Was she brought to you, or did you find her?"

"I found her myself."



"Will you tell me where and when? Believe me my lord, it is from no idle curiosity that I ask."

"It was as I have told you, somewhat over eighteen years ago," answered the old man, deeply affected. "I was travelling for pleasure and for information, and among the places which I visited was Arigentum, a considerable city on the southern coast of Sicily. One day, while sailing along the shore in a barge, I landed to obtain some fruit, and as the shade of the orange grove was inviting I rested there until near nightfall. I had called upon my attendants to make ready the barge for return to the city and was standing upon the shore while they loosened the sail, when my attention was arrested by a curious looking object in the water. It appeared to be a chest, and to have caught upon the sandy bottom. I called my slaves, and bade them wade in and bring the chest to the dry land, where I caused it to be opened, which I assure you, was a work of no little difficulty. With my own hand I threw back the lid, and you may judge of my surprise upon finding within it a female infant, near whose head, and arranged with consummate skill, was a leathern bag of goat's milk, from which the child had been drawing sustenance. In the cover of the chest were small air-holes, while the bottom was heavily loaded with bars of copper. The lining and the bed were of the most rare and costly material, and very elaborately wrought with gold. I bore the infant to my home in Pompeii, and having forbidden my slaves, upon pain of severe punishment, to mention the subject, I gave it to one of my women, who had just become a mother, and she nursed it till it had grown strong and healthy, after which I procured for it more suitable attendance. From that time the child has grown up under my own tender care; and she stands before us to-day a maiden of truth and virtue such as is seldom found, and a child of whom even a monarch might well be proud!"

"And Myrrha is that child?" whispered Tyron.

"She is."

The shrine-maker turned to the maiden, his face radiant, and his eyes brimming with bright tears. His arms were half extended, and in low, pleading tones he said:

"Myrrha, look upon me! Oh, tell me—tell me—Doth not thy heart bear for me a feeling that could make thee happy in its full consummation? Is there no instinct of soul—no keen perception of sense—that opens for Tyron the door of thy love? Myrrha!—Oh, Myrrha! must I speak, and tell thee what thou art to me—what I am to thee?"

There was no need. The new life—the wondrous hope—unspringing in her soul, was now a reality. For Saxoness she had felt love—love deep and abiding—but it had been the offspring of gratitude and respect; and she had ever held him in reverence and esteem. But for this mysterious man she felt a new and warmer love—a love born of the heart's tenderest instincts—a love which seemed a long-slumbering part of her very nature now springing into blooming, fragrant life.

"Thou art my father!" she said, with eager, expectant look.

"Heaven be thanked! Aye, Myrrha, I am thy father! Thou art my own child!—my own!—my own!"

Myrrha forgot that Tyron was but an humble artisan—she forgot his lowly abode, and his sphere of toil—forgot that she had been reared in a home of wealth and refinement—remembering only that she gazed upon the man who was her true father—the author of her being; and with a low cry of rapturous joy she sprang forward, and rested upon his bosom.

"Oh!" exclaimed the happy man, folding the fair one in his strong embrace, and raising his streaming eyes to heaven, "how have I longed for this moment! How hath my soul travelled in anguish of suspense when hope faltered in view of this reunion! Thou monarch of the universe, I thank thee! and in this merciful dispensation I feel that I am forgiven!—Myrrha!—My child!—Oh, joy! Oh, bliss!"

Big tears rolled down the strong man's cheeks, and his great heart swelled almost to joyful bursting. Myrrha gazed up into his face—no fear, no doubt—but blessed in the assurance that she had found a new world of rapture. Presently she felt a light hand laid upon her shoulder, and a sweet voice whispered:

"My sister! My own, own sister!"

And as Myrrha turned she met the warm love-light of Zorah's brown eyes.

"And is this, too, a blessed reality?" cried the bewildered girl.

"Yes, yes, Myrrha," answered Tyron, with a proud and beaming look. "You are both my children—both."

"Ah," said Zorah, with a radiant smile, as she drew her arm around Myrrha's neck; "while I bore thee companionship amid the dangers and trials

through which we have passed, you little thought 'twas a sister who smiled upon you, who wept with you, and who bade you hope."

"And you knew it all the time?" returned Myrrha.

"I believed it was so, and in my soul I know it. I have felt a blissful assurance of our relationship from the evening on which you first sought shelter beneath our father's roof."

Thus speaking Zorah drew her sister aside, and Tyron approached the wonder-stricken king.

"Festus," he said; "you have seen and heard?"

"I have," replied the youthful monarch; "and I am lost in astonishment."

"Astonishment?" repeated Tyron.

"Aye—I am deep buried in a maze of wonder."

"But the matter hath explained itself. All is plain now."

Festus gazed upon the wonderful man, and knew not what to say.

"After this," pursued Tyron, "what say you to the proposed nuptials?"

"Are we not here to have them consummated?" demanded the king, a deep shade of fear and suspense clouding his handsome face.

"For that purpose we came."

"And will you deny me the hand which Saxoness had promised?"

"Look ye, Festus. When you sought the hand of this fair maiden you believed her to be of gentle birth. Now that she proves to be only the child of an humble artisan will you still maintain the suit?"

The young monarch meditated a moment, and then, with stern and solemn look, he stepped down from the throne, and taking the jewelled crown from his head, he placed it upon Myrrha's brow, and then knelt at her feet.

"Give me both or give me neither!" "I would rather take my station at your forge and anvil, and earn my bread in weary toil, with Myrrha's love, than be a king without it!"

Tyron wiped away a tear from his bronzed cheek, and with thankful look he lifted the crown from Myrrha's brow, and replaced it upon the head where it belonged. Then he raised Festus to his feet, and placed the hands of the loving twain together.

"She is yours, my true-hearted son. And now let the rites be consummated."

"But first," pleaded Festus, in eager tones, "tell us more of this wondrous story. There is yet a deep mystery which you have not opened to us."

"You shall know all in good time, Festus."

"And why not now? Oh, tell me who and what thou art!"

"Yes, father!" joined Myrrha, in persuasive tones.

"Not now, my children. Let the marriage ceremony proceed. For that we are assembled. After that you shall be gratified."

"Come!" whispered Zorah. "You can trust me once more."

Myrrha gazed into the face of her sweet sister and in a moment more she was led to the royal throne.

#### CHAPTER XIX.

In the grand hall of audience—the Forum of the Royal Palace—kneelt a host of faithful, happy subjects, doing homage to their king and queen. Tyron alone, of all the assembly, stood erect. He knelt not, nor did he bow. A grateful and benignant look was upon his face, as he saw the rich diadem of Pompeii's Queen upon his daughter's brow; and when he heard the vociferous praise of the multitude a shade of pride tinged the expression of the noble countenance.

At length silence reigned in the place.

"Now, good Tyron, forget not thy promise," said the king, earnestly. "I am over-anxious to hear thy story; for, to speak truly, I have of late watched the shades of expression come and go upon that face of yours with a strange and startling suspicion. On the night when you came to my house to tell me of the whereabouts of Myrrha I first entertained it."

"And what have you suspected?" asked Tyron, with a slight smile.

"That you were never in my service."

"You are right, Festus. These hands of mine never did the service of a bondman."

"Then you are not the shrine-maker?"

"Aye—I am."

"How!" exclaimed the king. You the shrine-maker, and yet not my father's bondman? I do not comprehend."

"Nor will you so long as you question in the dark," returned Tyron smiling.

"Go on—go on. I will ask no more."

"Then listen, and you shall hear my story."

The mysterious man moved back a pace, and then went on:

"I am not a native of Pompeii, nor yet of Campania; but of a country that owes allegiance to none other. There were two brothers of us—we were twins—and so nearly did we resemble one another that even our parents were often at fault in distinguishing us. I had a wife whom I loved as the pride of my being, and for whom I cared as for the apple of my eye; but in an ill-omened hour I became mad with the belief that she was false to me. What should have put such a suspicion into my mind, now that I have reflected, and suffered, I know not; but it came and I was as one bereft of reason."

"My wife protested her innocence upon her bended knees; but I believed her not. At length she bore to me a child, and then—oh, horror! the madness culminated. I looked upon the fair bud of humanity, and swore 'twas no blood of mine. No prayers—no tears—no protestations—no oaths upon the sacred shrines of heaven—could bend my stubborn will! The fatal poison was in my heart, and I resolved that the infant should be put for ever from my sight. And yet I would not that the mother should know the fate of the little one; so I stole it away at night, and carried it to the sea-shore, fully prepared to cast it into the deep flood, and there end its existence. The moon shone brightly upon the face of the child, as it nestled confidently to my bosom, and I thought it looked up and smiled."

"That smile was potent, and my fell purpose was unheeded. Whatever might have been the sin of my wife, that gentle, helpless thing was not to blame. Thus I resolved that I would not kill it outright, but that I would put it away with a chance of its life. I returned to the city, and had a strong box made, and so arranged that the infant might live in it for some time. Thus prepared I bore the infant again to the shore, and cast it into the sea. I then prayed that I might never behold the child again; and yet another prayer, deep and fervent, found silent lodgment in my soul—that some kind hand might intervene to save and protect it."

"I returned to my home sad and morose. My wife asked for her child, and I told her what I had done. She did not rave—she did not upbraid me—nor yet did she openly cast blame upon me; but she sank, body and spirit, into pain, agony, and deep despair. At length I became convinced of my wife's stern purity and innocence; and I knew that it was my own flesh and blood I had consigned to the sea! Another child was born to me—my sweet Zorah—but that could not make me happy. I grew more morose, more miserable, and at length, to cap the climax of folly, I quarrelled with my brother. I accused him of things impossible and absurd, and would listen to no explanation; and upon his shoulders I sought to lay the blame of the great crime I had committed. He bore all he could, and then he fled from our home, and banished himself from his country. He came to Pompeii, where he had a friend, who had formerly been our teacher and preceptor, Hippothoon, the high-priest of the Temple of Jupiter. My brother, as well as myself, had been educated by a wise and provident father in the higher and more useful arts, and after a time he and Hippothoon entered into a compact. My brother was to make shrines for the temple, and at the end of a few years the priest, who was stricken with years and infirm, was to depart and give place to him in the sacred office."

"But Hippothoon had a special work to perform, and thus he said to my brother:

"In this city is a Greek prince—the true son of the royal Melanthon—whom his mother had hidden away from the Roman. The prince is but a child yet, and lives with Festus, and bears his name. That child may yet grow up, and be restored to his rights; and to the end that he may be qualified he should be taught the use of arms, and the science of government. Wilt thou go and do it?"

"And my brother answered that he would; and that he might do the work effectually, and at the same time secretly, he sold himself to Festus, as a worker in metals. But he followed to the office of high-priest much sooner than he had expected. Hippothoon died, announcing that the oracle had designated my brother as his successor. You will understand that my brother served Festus under his other name of Tyron. And after the death of Hippothoon he acted as priest, and yet retained his place at his forge. His disguise of beard and hair and robes in the temple was complete, and none mistrusted the secret."

"Both my brother and myself were gifted with wondrous power of ventriloquism. Whether that peculiar power hath ever served the priest of the Oracle you must judge for yourselves; but I can assure you it hath served me, and saved me, too. More than once have I startled Octavius by that means."

"While my brother was thus employed time dragged sadly and wearily with me. I knew no joy—no comfort. The pale face of my wife was a continual re-

murder of my criminal madness, and the smile that I once saw, by the shore of the sea, in the soft moonlight, upon the face of my child, haunted me by day and by night. At length I heard from my brother, whom I had long endeavoured to find, and he sent to me the startling intelligence that from the lips of a dying slave he had learned the fact that years before a box, such as I had set adrift, had been picked up on the Sicilian coast by a citizen of Pompeii, and that a female infant found therein had been brought to that city, and there reared in a home of luxury and refinement. As quickly as possible I arranged my affairs for the purpose of coming to this city, resolved not to return to my home until I had found my first-born. After a dark and solemn night of years a smile came to the face of my wife, and under the influence of that bright ray I went forth, strong and hopeful.

"I came to Pompeii. My brother still resembled me so nearly that only the closest scrutiny could detect a difference in our faces. In form and size we were alike. Seizing upon these circumstances I made preparations for immediate settlement in this city without exposing my true character. My brother had just left your service, Festus; and assuming his humble artisan's guise I took his place at the forge, while he devoted all his time at the temple. Knowing the quick wit of Zorah, I brought her with me, and during the past year I have worked at the calling I had taken upon myself, at the same time diligently prosecuting my search. The dying slave had given no name, and there were thousands of homes of luxury and refinement, and in hundreds of them were maidens of the age I sought. I soon saw that Pompeii was badly governed; that foul ulcers were sapping the life of her constitution, and that tyranny and lust were the ruling passions of the governing class. Do not wonder that I, who had done so great a crime, should have thus meditated upon the crimes of others. Remember that mine was a crime of madness, and that by long years of bitterest torture I had paid the penalty. I had come forth from the fire a new man!

"At length my brother gained information that led me to look upon the supposed daughter of Saxones as my child. I saw her, and my heart came near bursting with its burden of grateful joy; for I knew there could be no mistake. She not only looked the very counterpart of the mother who bore her, but she presented to me the same sweetly smiling face which had beamed upon me by the shore of the sea, and which had held place in my heart, growing more deeply and strongly fixed, year by year, through all the dark and mournful period! Our next discovery was, that the maiden was affianced to young Festus; and then my brother told me the secret of the Greek Prince. This caused me to change my plans somewhat, and I did not at once make myself known as I had intended. I had gained knowledge of the proposed rising of the Greeks, and in that I saw the elevation of Festus to the throne. I reflected long and carefully; and when I knew that the youth was worthy, and the love between himself and my child was pure, strong, and mutual, I resolved to wait, and let matters take their own course, being entirely willing that my daughter should remain in Pompeii if she could be the counsellor and assistant of a just king in a reformed and humane government. Then it was that my brother, thinking to startle Octavius, promulgated the Oracle; and on the very next day the king asked Saxones for Myrrha's hand, that he might make her the wife of the prince.

"I need not recount to you the sore trials which have succeeded. Only one dark spot remains—the death of my brother! But there is a solemn satisfaction in the reflection that he died in my arms, his head pillowed upon my bosom, and that with his last breath he blessed me!

The speaker paused, and bowed his head upon his hand; and bright drops were seen to roll down between his fingers. But the emotion was subdued, and then he added:

"At times I have worn the priestly garb, while my brother has played the artisan; and hence you will see how simple in deed has been the deception we have practised, and yet you can understand how mysterious has been the result. What more shall I tell you? You know all that hath transpired; and, surely, you cannot deny that the hand of a merciful Providence is visible in the work of redemption and purification which hath made Pompeii a peaceful abode. Once more—Myrrha—my child!"

And again the restored daughter was strained to her father's bosom.

"Oh, my mother!" she murmured, looking up.

"She lives; and she shall come to you. I have sent a messenger to her—I sent to her the glad tidings as soon as my eyes had beheld you."

And still the king, and the queen, and all those who had gathered near to hear the artisan's story, were as deep in mystery as ever. "Who is Tyron?"

was a question that rested upon every lip, and a hundred tongues would have given it utterance, but for the abrupt entrance of a dust-covered, panting messenger.

"Sire!" he cried, in the frenzy of fear; "we are lost! Heavy war-ships have cast anchor beyond Isistra, and the coast is swarming with armed men, who hasten towards the city in solid columns! We cannot oppose them, for our forces are not yet organised."

The young monarch turned pale, and trembled with alarm.

"Saw you their banner, good Hector?" demanded Tyron of the messenger.

"Yes."

"And what was its device?"

"A winged lion, wrought in gold, upon a field of blue!"

"Festus," said the strange man, "you need not fear. That is a friendly banner."

"But whence come they? Who are they?"

"Know you not the nationality betokened by that device?"

"Yes. 'Tis the royal standard of Carthage," said Festus, paling again. "By heaven! the terrible Marmour hath come to ravage our fair land!"

Even as he spoke the murmur of many voices fell upon his ear—voices syllabling a strange language—and the tramp of heavy feet were heard upon the piazza. Presently a squad of frightened guardsmen rushed into the apartment; but ere they could tell their tale of terror there followed hard upon them a serried column of armed men, clad in a strange and rich attire. Festus sank back with a groan, fearing not for himself, but for those who might look to him for protection. But the intruders saw him not. They had singled out the towering presence of Tyron, and upon none other did they look.

"The King! The King!" shouted the Carthaginian general; and on the instant that swaying throng, flashing with gold and jewels, pressed close around the mystic hero, and went down, in humble homage, upon their knees!

"Up, up, my loyal subjects!" cried Tyron. "Bring you not your Queen?"

"Yes, sire. She is here."

As the general thus replied he made a motion with his hand, and those who had followed him stood aside. Up through the living aisle was borne a pavilion covered with purple silk; and when the bearers had set it down there stepped forth a female of middle age, yet very beautiful.

"My husband! My child!" she exclaimed, in joyful accents, springing towards the spot where Zorah had glided to her father's side.

"Oh!" she beseechingly pleaded, leaning back from Tyron's fond embrace; "you have not deceived me! Our first-born is found?"

"I have not deceived you, sweet Electra. The child is safe—is here!"

Myrrha had started forward. There was a monitor in her soul that told her she beheld her mother. She felt it thrill through every avenue of sense, and she knew it was true; and with not a shadow of doubt, but with entire faith and love, she put forth her arms. Electra gazed into the face of the young and beautiful queen of Pompeii—a flood of rapturous light filled her eyes—her bosom swelled with mighty emotion—and in a moment more mother and child, after so many years, were sobbing and weeping in each other's embrace!

"Now," said Tyron, after he had conducted Myrrha to the throne, and placed her by her husband's side; "you will look upon me no more in doubt and mystery; for know ye that I am none other than Tyron Marmour, King of Carthage! And you, Festus, if you have not gained the hand of a gentle maiden of Pompeii, can be assured that you have won for a wife the princess of a right royal house—the daughter of a monarch whose will none dare oppose."

The youthful ruler hastened down from his throne, and bent his knee to the Carthaginian king. Then those who stood around followed his example; and a prolonged shout of grateful homage rent the air.

"Arise! arise!" pronounced Tyron, taking Festus by the hand, and lifting him to his feet. And then, while a look of subdued and solemn satisfaction glowed upon his noble face, he continued: "Now, my son, take your sceptre, and away it for the good of Pompeii. If you want an incentive to duty, read the history of the kingdoms of earth that have passed away. It is written in blood—in ruin and decay—and will afford you grave admonition. And you, my sweet Myrrha, must not forget the part you are called upon to act. I leave with you a husband and a father; for though I go from you, yet I know that Saxones will be to you the same kind guardian that he has been for so many years. You will both look to him for counsel and advice, and forget not how much happiness we all owe to him."

"My own broad kingdom now claims my attention; but we shall meet again, and, I hope, often. Zorah shall stay with you yet a while longer, to bless you with her cheerful presence; and your mother claims the privilege of abiding for a time with you, that she may enjoy more fully the heavenly bliss of this new-found treasure of love!"

"Festus, I have but one more word: Remember that your subjects are your masters; and they will love and honour you, and faithfully serve you, as you shall serve them humanely and justly!"

THE END.

## FACETIÆ.

A NONREPRESENTATIVE MAN.—*Waiter*: "No Ministerial whitebait dinner! That's your friend Gladstone. And he calls his self member for Greenwich!"—*Punch*.

HIGHLY PROPER.—In one paragraph of the speech, the Queen recognises what Parliament has done for the public weal. Very right, and we hope that the cabs will now be better.—*Punch*.

PRO AND CON.

Prosaic Uncle: "Like to be a smuggler! Don't talk nonsense, George!"

George: "Well! I'd rather live in a nice cave like this one here, 'stead o' those beastly hot lodgings!"—*Punch*.

CRICKET!

Uncle: "Well, Tom, and what have you done in cricket this half?"

Tom: "Oh, bless you, uncle, we've been 'nowhere' this season; all our best 'men,' you know, were down with the measles!"—*Punch*.

FOOTING OF CHINESE ROYALTY.

Through one of Reuter's wires we are informed that:

"The Chinese authorities at Peking have officially intimated to Sir Rutherford Alcock that the Duke of Edinburgh cannot be received by the royal family of China on a footing of equality."

This shows some abatement of Chinese self-esteem. The royal family of China mean, of course, that they are prepared to receive the Queen of England's son on a footing of superiority, a considerably higher footing than their own. Accordingly it has doubtless been "intimated," if not plainly announced, to them in return, that they are at liberty to kiss his royal highness's foot, and will obtain assuredly therefrom, the footing which they are entitled to.—*Punch*.

THE OLD HUNDREDETH.—The *Chester Chronicle* says that a woman by name Elizabeth Howell, residing at Ridley, has just entered her hundredth year. How-well she has worn!—*Fus*.

HISTORICAL.—The Principal of St. Mark's College, Chelsea, has applied for an injunction against the 'Captive Balloon.' History repeats itself—here's another Cromwell saying "take away that bubble!"

Of the ice exported from Norway last year out of a total of 45,593 tons, England took 44,055. Are not our neighbours justified in talking of the frigidity of our national character?—*Tomahawk*.

STAR-TELLING.—Mr. Childers has persuaded the House to allow him to spend 10,500*l.* on observations on the coming transit of Venus across the sun's disc. A great deal has been made of the economic management of the First Lord of the Admiralty—is this in transit too? If these observations have no other result, they will, at least, lead to a good deal of discussing!—*July*.

KEEPING A CONSCIENCE.—The great controversy on the propriety of requiring a subscription to articles of faith, as practised by the Church of England, excited at this time (1772) a very strong sensation amongst the members of two universities. Paley, when pressed to sign the clerical petition which was presented to the House of Commons for relief, excused himself, saying, "he could not afford to keep a conscience."

A CHEERFUL SUGGESTION.

Mrs. Lovebird (with acrimony): "I do so wish, Mr. Tozer, as dear Harry's oldest friend, you could suggest some means of killing time for him—he suffers so from want of excitement, poor fellow!"

Tozer: "Give a note, old boy, as you used to do in your bachelor days. That will make time positively fly, Mrs. L."

ADD HAIR.—Hunter said to his Celtic steward a short time before his marriage, "I hate anything like deception in matters of personal appearance! and if, even after I marry Lady Lithgow, I shall find that any portion of her beautiful head of hair is not of natural growth, or is falsely or artificially arranged, I will at once insist upon a separation!" "Better not," replied Patrick. "It will be best for the reputation of ye both, if ye'll take my advice, and without mindin' a bald spot at all, bravely adhere (add hair) to her!"



**A QUESTION OF TIME.**—When Jeremy Taylor was introduced to the Archbishop of Canterbury, he was told by the prelate, that his extreme youth was a bar to his present employment. "If your grace," replied Taylor, "will excuse me this fault, I promise, if I live, to mend it."

**BLISSFUL IGNORANCE.**—While travelling on board one of the Chelsea boats, the other day, a gentleman was cutting the leaves of a number of a new edition of Shakespeare, when an enlightened fellow-traveller looked over his shoulder and remarked, "Shakespeare's plays, eh? He keeps writin' of 'em, don't she?" "Oh, yes," was the Christian answer, "Shakespeare's the hardest working man in the world."

**DANGEROUS SENTIMENT.**

*Coming politician to new acquaintance:* "Taxation, sir, will be our ruin yet. Now, sir, I believe in a man, not only getting what he can but keeping all he gets: eh?"

*Acquaintance:* "Exactly the sort of a man I am."  
**BUSY BODIES.**—A master of a ship called out: "Who is below?" A boy answered, "Will sir," "What are you doing?"—"Nothing, sir." "Is Tom there?"—"Yes," said Tom. "What are you doing?"—"Helping Will, sir."

**A TRAVELLER'S STORY.**

A young Englishman who visited Paris, says: On the second day of my arrival, finding myself in a remote part of the city at my usual dinner hour, I stepped into an establishment that announced itself, in gilt letters over the door, as the "Restaurant du Cheval." A bill of fare was handed me. I selected a dish styled "potage de fourage," which I found to be excellent; winding up with a "pate de cheval," which was superb. I retired from the house well pleased with my meal; but for the life of me I couldn't guess whether the dishes I had been devouring with so much gusto were beef, mutton, or pork. To satisfy my natural curiosity, I brought home one of the bills of fare, and consulted my French and English dictionary on the doubtful points. You may imagine my horror and disgust on discovering after a careful examination of my lexicon, that I had actually been enjoying an unusually hearty meal composed entirely of horse meat!

**A SHARP YOUTH.**—A dozen years ago, my lot in London was fixed in the same establishment with a young fellow from a northern county. We were each strangers in the great city, and now and then went together to see some of its wonders. He was a swell—great on breast-pins, finger rings, and an exquisite silver-headed riding-cane—and he was so well up in all things genteel that he could have dined at the table of royalty, and not have blushed when the Queen asked him to take wine with her. Of course I felt my own inferiority when alongside him. But I learned to put a new estimate upon his qualities one day when we went to see Madame Tassaud's incomparable wax-work. He handed me the catalogue, and kindly allowed me to be the cicerone. We came to a group—"Napoleon and his Generals"—which scarcely needed any reference to the catalogue at all. But my friend said, "Which is Napoleon?" Wondering at the query, I pointed out the little corporal. The next question was, "Which is Bonaparte?"

**TWISTING WORDS.**

Somebody says that there is probably not another word in the English language that can be "twisted" more than the word "write," while somebody else insists that the word "twist" itself can be "twisted" a "consumed sight" more than the word "write," or any other word. Example:

**TWISTED-TWINE-TWISTER.**

When the twister a-twisting will twist him a twine,  
For the twisting his twist he three times does ent-twist;  
But, if one of the twines of the twist doth untwine,  
The twine that untwisteth, untwisteth the twine,  
Untwisting the twine that untwisteth between,  
He twists with his twister the two in a twine;  
Then twice having twisted the twines of the twine  
He twisteth the twine he hath twined in twain;  
The twain that in twisting before on the twine  
As twines were untwisted he now doth untwine.  
"Twixt the twain intertwisting a twine more between,  
He, twirling his twister, makes a twist of the twine."

**CAN TRAVEL LIKE PIZEN.**

The electric telegraph still remains a mystery to the million, and the ludicrous conceptions of its *modus operandi*, which some of the most ignorant people have formed, are as mirth-provoking as anything out of Babelais or Smollett.

Not long since, an old lady entered O'Reilly's office, in Peterborough, and said she had a message to send to London. In a few minutes her note was deposited in a dumb waiter, and ascended in a mysterious manner through the ceiling.

"Is that going straight to London?" inquired the old lady, with her eyes bent upon the ceiling.

"Yes, ma'am," answered the clerk.  
"I never was there," continued she, "but it hardly seems possible that their town lies in that direction. When will I get an answer, Mr. Telegraph?"  
"I can scarcely tell, ma'am; may be two or three hours."

The old lady went away, and returned in exactly two hours. Just as she entered the door the dumb waiter came down through the ceiling.

"There's your answer, ma'am," said the clerk.  
The old lady took the neat yellow envelope in her hand, with a smile of mingled gratification and astonishment.

"Now, that beats all," exclaimed she. "Bless my heart. All the way from London, and the wafer still wet. That's an awkward-looking box, but it can travel like pizen!"

**THE FARMER WHO MADE HIS OWN WEATHER.**

ONCE on a time (Lafontaine writes)  
Jove, sitting on th' Olympian heights,  
Called nimble Mercury to his side  
And bade him publish, far and wide,  
"A Farm to Let!" Whereat he flies  
Through all the world to advertise  
"The finest farm that can be found  
For fifty thousand miles around;  
To let—on terms quite sure to please  
Whoe'er may wish to take the lease!"

Then came the farmers, thick and fast,  
To see the land—which far surpassed  
Their brightest hopes—but in a trice  
All fell to higgling at the price.  
One said the soil was thin and poor;  
Another, that it lacked manure;  
And still another man made bold  
To say the land was sour and cold;  
Each finding fault, with shrewd intent  
To cheapen what he wished to rent.

At length, when all had said their say,  
And some began to go away,  
One, who as yet had held his peace,  
Proposed at once to take the lease  
Provided Jove would give him power  
O'er cold and heat, o'er sun and shower;

In brief—to sum it all together—  
The power to regulate the weather!  
'Tis granted. So by Jove's command  
The joyful tenant takes the land.  
He rains or shines, makes cold or warm,  
Brings down the dew, averts the storm;  
Rules, at his will, the wind that blows,  
And regulates the Winter's snows.  
In short, within the narrow range  
Of his own acres, makes the change  
Of seasons through the varied year,

Alas, the gift proves all to dear!  
For, while the farmer sees with pain  
His neighbours' lands are rich in grain,  
And all that genial Nature yields  
In thrifty herds and fruitful fields—  
His own—despite his anxious toil—  
Proves, at the best, ungrateful soil,  
That brings him naught but discontent,  
Without a sou to pay the rent?

What could he do? He cannot pay;  
And so the man was fain to pray  
To be forgiven; with shame confessed  
His folly—who essayed to test  
The power divine that rules above,  
And deemed himself more wise than Jove!

J. G. S.

**GEMS.**

We could rather do anything than acknowledge the merit of another, if we can help it. We cannot bear a superior or an equal. Hence ridicule is sure to prevail over truth, for the malice of mankind, thrown into the scale, gives the casting weight.

We are born in hope; we pass our childhood in hope; we are governed by hope through the whole course of our lives—and in our last moments hope is flattering to us; and not till the beating of our heart shall cease will its benign influence leave us.

**KINDNESS.**—A worthy Quaker thus wrote: "I expect to pass through this world but once. If, therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing that I can do to any fellow human being let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I will not pass this way again."

LEARN the value of a man's words and expres-

sions, and you know him. Each man has a measure of his own for everything; this he offers you inadvertently in his words. He who has a superlative for everything, wants a measure for the great or small.

**KIND words** are the brightest flowers of earth's existence; they make a very paradise of the humblest home that the world can show. Use them, and especially round the fireside circle. They are jewels beyond price, and more precious to heal the wounded heart, and make the down-weighed spirit glad, than all the other blessings the world can give.

**STATISTICS.**

**BANK NOTES.**—There has been issued a return of the bank notes issued by the issue department of the Bank of England in the first week in each month from the 1st July, 1868, to the 30th June, 1869. The securities held against the notes amount to 15,000,000*l.* For the week ending July 1, 1868, the notes held by public were 24,771,000*l.*; notes held by bank, 11,869,000*l.*; total issue, 36,660,000*l.*; bullion, 21,660,000*l.* For the week ending Aug. 5, the notes held by public were 24,963,000*l.*; notes held by bank, 10,256,000*l.*; total issue, 35,219,000*l.*; bullion, 20,219,000*l.* For the week ending Sept. 2, the notes held by public were 24,307,000*l.*; notes held by bank, 10,423,000*l.*; total issue, 34,730,000*l.*; bullion, 19,730,000*l.* For the week ending Oct. 7, the notes held by public were 24,648,000*l.*; notes held by bank, 10,045,000*l.*; total issue, 34,693,000*l.*; bullion, 19,693,000*l.* For the week ending Nov. 4, the notes held by public were 24,514,000*l.*; notes held by bank, 8,910,000*l.*; total issue, 33,424,000*l.*; bullion, 18,424,000*l.* For the week ending Dec. 2, the notes held by public were 23,510,000*l.*; notes held by bank, 8,497,000*l.*; total issue, 32,007,000*l.*; bullion, 17,007,000*l.* For the week ending Jan. 6, 1869, the notes held by public were 24,025,000*l.*; notes held by bank, 8,412,000*l.*; total issue, 32,437,000*l.*; bullion, 17,437,000*l.* For the week ending Feb. 3, the notes held by public were 23,822,000*l.*; notes held by bank, 8,628,000*l.*; total issue, 32,450,000*l.*; bullion, 17,450,000*l.* For the week ending March 3, the notes held by public were 23,567,000*l.*; notes held by bank, 8,360,000*l.*; total issue, 31,927,000*l.*; bullion, 16,927,000*l.* For the week ending April 7, the notes held by public were 23,974,000*l.*; notes held by bank, 7,265,000*l.*; total issue, 31,239,000*l.*; bullion, 16,239,000*l.* For the week ending May 5, the notes held by public were 24,006,000*l.*; notes held by bank, 6,505,000*l.*; total issue, 30,511,000*l.*; bullion, 15,511,000*l.* For the week ending June 2, the notes held by public were 23,525,000*l.*; notes held by bank, 8,139,000*l.*; total issue, 31,664,000*l.*; bullion, 16,664,000*l.*

**MISCELLANEOUS.**

It has been decided that there will be no examination in December next for admission to the Royal Military College.

It is understood that a light cable, on the principle of Professor Varley, is contemplated to be laid between Ireland and America.

**MR. W. BROWN**, champion sculler of America, arrived recently at Liverpool. He brings a paper boat, weighing only 22lb., and is going to scull a match with the champion of the Thames.

Boys sometimes do get into mischief. Dr. Johnson thought so, for he said: "Whenever you find three boys together, thrash them, for they either have been doing, are doing, or about to do some mischief."

**A SHOWER** of frogs at Henwick, near Worcester, is reported in a local newspaper. For a quarter of a mile the road is said to have been covered with "myriads of small frogs, varying in size from sixpence to a shilling, and some a little larger."

**LORD BROUGHTON** has left his papers to the British Museum, with strict injunctions that they are not to be opened till the year 1900, and that even then they are not to be published except with the consent of the reigning sovereign. Although the title of Lord Broughton is extinct, still the baronetcy of Hobhouse remains: the present baronet, Sir Charles Hobhouse, is a judge at Calcutta.

**SNAKES IN AUSTRALIA.**—Mr. Gerrard Krefft, F.L.S., is announced by the *Australasian* as being about to publish a work entitled "The Snakes of Australia: an Illustrated and Descriptive Catalogue of all the known Species." The same paper adds that in 1854 about twenty Australian snakes were known; at the present time there are about seventy species on the list; but it is reassuring to find from Mr. Krefft that "not one really dangerous serpent has been added to the fauna of the country."

CONTENTS.

Page	Page
GRAND COURT ... 457	TYRON, THE SHRINE-MAKER ... 476
NEW WEDDING REGULATIONS ... 460	AUSTRALIAN ... WILD HORSES ... 476
HASLEWOOD CASTLE ... 460	FACETIE ... 478
THE DOWAGER'S SECRET ... 461	TRAVELLER'S STORY ... 479
THE HAMPTON MYSTERY ... 463	FARMER WHO MADE HIS OWN WEATHER ... 479
OWEN McDERMOTT ... 466	STATISTICS ... 479
VOLCANIC WONDERS ... 468	GEMS ... 479
KILANE A PELE ... 479	MISCELLANEOUS ... 479
STUD OF THE SULTAN OF ZANZIBAR ... 468	No.
THE BIRTH MARK ... 469	GRAND COURT, commenced in ... 323
SCIENCE ... 471	THE HAMPTON MYSTERY, commenced in ... 323
CARTRIDGE FOR NEW RIVER ... 471	TYRON, THE SHRINE-MAKER, commenced in ... 324
INFLUENCE OF MEDICINES ON HEALTH ... 471	EVELYN'S PLOT, commenced in ... 326
GUN OF THE FUTURE ... 471	THE BIRTH MARK, commenced in ... 330
TURKISH BRIDGE ... 472	
IN MORTAL PERIL ... 472	
EVELYN'S PLOT ... 473	

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F. F.—We cannot give you any information on the subject.

AN ANXIOUS WIFE.—See answer to G. Thomas in this number.

A. B. C.—The plural of the word is formed by adding an "S."

G. R.—COCHRANE.—We do not profess to judge character by handwriting.

FAIRLEIGH.—His creditors have clearly a claim on the stock and outstanding debts.

A READER.—We cannot give you the information where to procure old postage stamps.

KINGFISHER.—You will require to take out a licence which will cost about 3s.

NEW ZEALAND.—1. Your handwriting is admirably suited for office work. 2. There are clerk's and purser's situations on board vessels. Apply to a shipping agent.

J. L.—1. "Rejected," not up to our standard. 2. Read the English poets and essayists, and study well those you like best.

R. H. WOOD.—The published price of Ollendorf's German Grammar is, we believe, 12s.; but you may be able to get it cheaper at a second-hand bookseller's.

G. THOMAS.—We have given ample information on the subject already. If you had consulted our numbers for the last few weeks it would have saved you writing.

AN INQUIRER.—We cannot answer your question. Ask a chemist. Under any circumstances we would not advise you to administer the gas yourself.

J. W. W.—Your verses to Evelyn may be very acceptable to the young lady, but are scarcely suitable for our columns.

ALBERT LEE.—We believe the address of Mr. Theodore Martin, husband of the talented actress called Miss Faucit, is Whitehall, London.

FLORENCE C.—1. There is no shade of red in your hair. 2. The name is a very pretty one. We do not know what it means.

D. M.—Your lines entitled "His Photograph" do not lack originality. If the execution had been equal to the conception we would have given them a place.

MYRA.—1.—Neither of the processes can be accomplished in the case of adults. 2. Your handwriting is neither elegant nor ugly. It has one merit, which is better than beauty, legibility.

X. Y. Z.—You should either refuse to receive the letters or return them unopened. He has no legal power over you; but you are able to indict him for conspiracy and annoyance.

BAYSWATER.—Marble may be cleaned by mixing up a quantity of the strongest soap lees with quicklime to the consistence of milk, and laying it on the marble for twenty-four hours; clean it afterwards with soap and water.

HENRY MARTIN.—We have every sympathy with you in the object which you have in view. Our journal is not, as you will see, a medium for advertisements, paragraph or otherwise, so that we cannot oblige you. We wish you every success.

NOTICE.

All purchasers of this Number of the London Reader will receive GRATIS No. 1 of EVERYBODY'S JOURNAL.

HAIDER D'ALARCOS.—1. Your lines on "Remembrance" evidence the possession of a tender fancy which wants cultivation; with care and study you may do better. The poem is, however, not up to our standard of excellence. 2. Thanks for your good wishes. Handwriting good.

F. WILL.—It is very painful for us to have letters such as yours. With every inclination to do you all the good in the world our intentions are stultified by the complex nature of the complaint. In all such cases our duty is clearly to advise the patient to consult a regular practitioner.

FRANK WILLIAMS.—1. Third finger of the right hand. 2. We do not, as a general rule, approve of such wide differences in age, more especially as the lady is the elder. However, if you love each other as you state, there is no reason why you should not become husband and wife.

MECHANIC.—It was not worth while making a bet about a reference to Shakespeare would have settled the matter. The lines are as follows:

"Sir,  
It is your fault I have loved Posthumus,  
You bred him as my playfellow; and he is  
A man worth any woman, over buys me  
Almost the sun he pays."

LISINDRAGE.—Shirts are said to have been first generally worn in the west of Europe early in the eighth century. Woollen shirts were commonly worn in England, until about 1253, when linen, but of a coarse kind (fine coming about this period from abroad), was first manufactured in England by Flemish artisans.

THE VALLEY OF CHILDHOOD.

Sweet vale where I rambled a reckless child,  
Mid brooks and wild flowers my spirit as wild,  
Thy river, thy church-bells, still chime in my ears,  
I see thy green beauty through memory's tears.  
Since I quitted thy shade, no flow'rets that shine,  
No streamlets that glide seem radiant as thine;  
No music of art, no magic of words,  
Sound sweet as thy bells or the song of thy birds.  
The needle is far from the pole it obeys,  
So my foot from thy solitude distantly strays;  
But true to the north as that needle will be,  
My heart, lovely valley, turns constant to thee.  
Sweet vale where I rambled a reckless child,  
Mid brooks and wild flowers, my spirit as wild,  
Thy river, thy church-bells still chime in my ears,  
I see thy green beauty through memory's tears.

N. M.

LIZZIE.—The gentleman is too old for you. You are suffering from a kind of calf love which will soon pass away. Don't read so much poetry, and do more in the kitchen in the matter of pies and pastry. Life is not such a blank as you seem to imagine; but you are in the first and last stage of a complaint to which most susceptible young ladies are subject. Write again in a month or so and let us know how you get on. We venture to predict you will be thoroughly cured.

CONSERVATORY.—The dwarf birch is found in the highlands of Scotland, especially in wet, boggy places, forming a low bush seldom more than two or three feet in height. Though rather looked on as a botanical curiosity in Britain, it is a plant of immense importance to the inhabitants of barren Lapland, furnishing them with their chief fuel and bedding, while the seeds nourish the Ptarmigan, which in its turn becomes a most valuable article of food to the natives.

A CAMEL.—Skeleton leaves may be made by steeping leaves in rain water in an open vessel exposed to the air and sun. Water must occasionally be added to compensate loss by evaporation. The leaves will putrefy, and then their membranes will begin to open; then lay them on a clean white plate filled with fresh water, and with gentle touches take off the external membranes, separating them cautiously near the middle rib. When there is an opening towards the latter the whole membrane separates easily. The process requires a great deal of patience, as ample time must be given for the vegetable tissues to decay and separate.

WALTON.—Political economy is the science which has for its object the improvement of the condition of mankind, and the promotion of civilisation, wealth, and happiness. Its history in this country may be dated from the publication of Dr. Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations," 1776. The works of Mill and McCulloch are justly celebrated. A Professorship of Political Economy was established at Oxford by Mr. Henry Drummond, M.P., 1825; and at Cambridge, first by Mr. G. Fryme, in 1828, but regularly established by the University in 1863. Mr. Henry Fawcett, the blind statesman, being the first professor.

CLOCKMAKER.—1. The day began to be divided into hours from the year 293, B.C., when L. Fapius Cursor erected a sun-dial in the temple of Quirina, at Rome. Previously to the invention of water-clocks, 153, B.C., the time was called at Rome by public criers. 2. The Chinese divide the day into twelve parts of two hours each. The Italians reckon twenty-four hours round instead of two divisions of twelve hours. In England, the measurement of time was, in early days, uncertain; one expedient was by wax candles, three wicks burning an hour, and six wax candles burning twenty-four hours; said to have been invented by Alfred, A.D., 866.

LYDIA VANE.—You have acted very foolishly, and are weakly and vainly trying to throw the blame on your husband. We should have been better pleased if you had been franker in your communication. We have been puzzled to get at the real truth of the matter, but as far as we can make out, it is this: Your husband, as you state, left you at M—, stating that he was obliged to return to town for a few days. You had been only settled at your seaside quarters three days, and at first you were angry at the separation, and disposed to believe that he wished to return simply to enjoy himself with two bachelor friends, whom you don't like, and who appear to possess an influence for evil over your husband. You felt lonely, and in a foolish moment, and in a fit of pique, consented to hold converse with a gentleman who met and spoke to you on the beach. This was bad enough, but since your return to town you have held clandestine communication by letter through the medium of a suburban post office. He presses for an appointment, and you feel inclined to give him one so as to end the affair. We would advise you to do nothing of the sort. Explain the matter to your husband, and ask his forgiveness.

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